

Wellness Articles

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Fitting in physical activity during the day

Finding time to exercise during the day can be challenging, especially for the busiest of people with the most action-packed schedules.

But here's some good news. You don't need to spend hours at the gym or on a treadmill to be healthy. Experts recommend at least 2.5 hours of moderate to vigorous activity a week, so with some planning and creativity, you can make physical movement a regular part of your daily life.

Being active for shorter periods of time, throughout the day and week, can add up quickly! A little goes a long way, and consistent, small steps often have the greatest impact on our health.

Sit less, move more!

Moderate to vigorous activities elevate your heartbeat and increase the amount of oxygen that goes to the heart and muscles, which allow them to work longer. Many activities, including many kinds of daily activities, that raise the heart rate and keep it up for an extended period can improve aerobic fitness. If these activities are done regularly and long enough, they can help improve fitness.

Children as young as preschool age benefit from being active while it is best for teens and children (starting at age five) to do moderate to vigorous activity at least one hour every day.

Ways to fit physical activity into a busy lifestyle:

Fitting movement into your busy life doesn't have to be complicated. Add variety and do things you enjoy. If your job or lifestyle includes a lot of sitting, try adding short bursts of activity to your day.

Some examples include:

- Setting a "movement timer" to remind you to get up and stretch at least every hour.

- Use your commute to add in an extra walk or bike ride to your day. Park several blocks away or get off the bus a few stops early.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator, at least for a few floors.
- Suggest holding meetings with co-workers during a walk inside or outside of the building.
- Use a free smartphone app or online exercise video. These programs often have short interval training ideas or 15 minute workouts for all abilities and fitness levels.
- Use your morning and afternoon breaks to take a quick walk.
- Go the distance when you can. Get your coffee on another floor or use the washroom that's farthest from your office.
- Find a work buddy who you can do activities with. Being accountable to someone can serve as a reminder to incorporate movement into your day.
- Put it in your calendar! Whether it's 15 minutes, 30 minutes, or an hour, block off time for your activity or activities.
- Plug in your favourite music, book, or podcast, lace up your running shoes, and head outside. You'll be amazed how differently you feel, even after a few minutes.
- Get your family involved. Combining family time with exercise is a fun way for busy parents and children to find time together and to live an active lifestyle. It's a win-win for everyone!

Mix it up!

Adding activity into your day shouldn't feel like a chore or a punishment. It should be fun! Choose activities that you enjoy and mix it up with different types of exercise. The goal of aerobic fitness is to increase the amount of oxygen that goes to the heart and muscles, which allows them to work longer.