

Boost Your Body: Integrate Activity Throughout Your Day

Living an active lifestyle is a great way to maintain good health. Making a conscious effort to integrate activity into daily life will pay off with healthy benefits such as having more energy, losing weight, and perhaps lowering blood pressure and cholesterol. Physical activity increases circulation, lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and developing Type 2 diabetes. Physical activity maintains healthy bones, muscles and joints and is a proven booster of mental health as well.

Try adding physical activity to your daily routine until it becomes second nature. Try some of the following suggestions for adding physical activity. Remember to keep hydrated by drinking a glass of water before exercising, and drink another half cup of water after 15 minutes of activity. Take 3 to 5 minutes to stretch your muscles before beginning the activity.

Try some of these ideas and watch your health improve!

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk up the stairs quickly. Vary the routine by slowing down and taking two stairs at a time, which will work the upper legs.
- Walk whenever possible. During breaks at work, walk around the block, walk down the halls, or take a jaunt around the building. Take long strides and move at a quicker than normal pace to increase your heart rate.
- Park in the farthest parking space and walk to your destination.
- Stand instead of sitting (standing burns more calories). Pace while you are on the phone.
- Plant a garden and work in it during the spring and summer. Gardening will take your body through a whole range of movements.
- Don't use drive-through windows. Park your car and walk to do your banking, eating, and errands.
- At the grocery store, bag and carry your own groceries out to the car—without the cart.
- Lose the remote to the television and stereo system. Get up and change channels.
- Mow with a push mower instead of a riding mower.
- Consider doing home maintenance, improvement, and repairs yourself. Jobs like painting and landscaping are good exercise. Cleaning out gutters, washing windows, shoveling snow, and raking leaves are great ways to keep you moving and are money savers too.
- Offer to help out a friend or neighbor with yardwork, car washing, etc. Hand washing and waxing a car is a good upper body workout.
- If you have children or grandchildren, spend some quality time playing with them. Play catch, jump rope, play on the monkey bars, push them on the swing, throw the football, and bounce the basketball.
- Take lessons and go play...tennis, racquetball, golf (no cart!) or any other activity you think you may enjoy. Or take your partner and go out dancing.
- Join the local hiking, walking, or bicycling club. It's a great way to meet other active people.
- Place a box in your vehicle that contains walking shoes, clean socks, a towel, Frisbee, tennis racket, softball gloves, etc. You'll be ready for action at any time with your "vehicle locker room."
- Buy a Wii. This easy-to-learn video game system features tennis, baseball, bowling, golf, and boxing simulations that use a hand-held remote to mimic the actions actually performed in the sport.

For more information, please visit: