

# Finding the time and place for daily exercise



## You know it's important

We've all been taught from a young age to try and fit in a little regular exercise. You know it's good for you. You know it makes you feel better, both physically and mentally. But, when your schedule gets busy, it's also one of the first things to drop from the to-do list. And, once you get out of the daily habit, it's hard to pick it back up again.

There are legitimate obstacles to exercising – lack of time is just one of them. But there are ways to overcome those obstacles and fit in exercise at home or at the office.

## Breaking down the process

There are three parts to a well-balanced exercise program: aerobic activity, resistance training and flexibility exercises.<sup>1</sup>

- Aerobic activity uses your large muscles and causes your body to use more oxygen. This kind of exercise is good for the heart, lungs and blood vessels. Brisk walking, jogging or running, and playing basketball are types of aerobic activities.
- Resistance training, also called strength training, firms and strengthens your muscles. It makes your bones stronger and improves your balance and coordination. Examples of resistance training include lunges, chest presses and bicep curls.
- Flexibility exercises stretch and lengthen your muscles, and they also help keep your joints limber. A consistent yoga practice is just one way to stay flexible.

## Working out at home

You don't need much to create a workout spot in your home – just some floor space and a few essentials. For strength training, use a set of lightweight dumbbells or resistance bands. Bottled water or heavy cans will do in a pinch. And exercises that use your own body for resistance,

like pushups and crunches, don't require any equipment at all. Change up your routine with DVDs from the library that you exchange weekly. Use light hand weights to work out while you're watching TV or chatting on the phone.<sup>2</sup>

For aerobic activity, consider walking, jogging, running, riding a bike, playing tennis, swimming laps or playing basketball. It's important to like the activity you're doing. If you enjoy it, you're more likely to look forward to your workout and stick with it.<sup>3</sup>

You can find aerobic and strength-training opportunities in unexpected places. Some everyday household tasks can help build strength and endurance:<sup>4</sup>

- Washing and waxing a car
- Washing windows or floors
- Gardening
- Raking leaves
- Pushing a stroller
- Shoveling snow

## Your office workout

If you have an office job, you may find yourself sitting for hours on end on the phone, at meetings or on the computer. Physical activity at the office is a matter of creating opportunities. You may not be able to carve out a half-hour during the workday, but small efforts can still add up to big results.

Find ways to work out: Use the stairs instead of the elevator; walk to your co-worker's office instead of e-mailing or phoning; and park far away from the entrance. Look for a spot around your workplace where you can walk at lunch, during breaks or after work. Bring exercise clothes with you so you can walk or jog at a park or on a trail or track before or after work.<sup>5</sup>

Walk to the break room and back; use the stairs to the restroom one flight up. Try looking away from the computer every 30 minutes or so and take a stretch. Roll your shoulders, arch your back, stand up and stretch your legs. On business trips, walk at the airport. If you're traveling by car, pull off at a park or a rest area and take a five-minute walk.<sup>6</sup>

## Choose your move

### Moderate activities

- Hiking (level ground)
- Light gardening
- Dancing
- Golf (walking)
- Bicycling (less than 10 mph)
- Walking (3.5 mph)
- Swimming

### Vigorous activities

- Running/jogging
- Bicycling (more than 10 mph)
- Walking (4.5 mph)
- Heavy yard work
- Basketball
- Jumping rope
- Soccer

## Breaking through

What's your reason for not working out? Below are some common excuses – and ways to overcome them:

**Problem:** Between work, family and other demands, I am too busy to exercise.

**Solution:** Make physical activity a priority every day.

Carve the time out of your day – before or after work, on lunch hour – and put it on your calendar.

**Problem:** Using a treadmill or stationary bike is boring.

**Solution:** Watch TV or listen to music or an audio book while working out. Better yet, head outside for a walk or a bike ride, and bring a friend along.

**Problem:** I've never been an athlete.

**Solution:** You don't have to be an athlete to be physically active. Yoga, hiking and planting a garden are just some things to try. Walking is a great choice because it's easy, inexpensive and there's no training required.<sup>7</sup>

The key to being physically fit isn't putting in grueling hours at the gym; it's about seizing daily opportunities or creating them yourself. So, devote yourself to a lifetime of being physically fit, one day at a time.



Visit [anthem.com](http://anthem.com) for more ways to get healthy – and stay healthy.

#### Resources

- <sup>1</sup> National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, *Your Guide to Physical Activity and Your Heart*, (June 2006): [nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov)
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Be Active Your Way: A Guide for Adults*, (October 2008): [healthierus.gov](http://healthierus.gov)
- <sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *How Much Activity Do Adults Need?*, (December 2008): [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
- <sup>4</sup> National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, *Guide to Physical Activity*, (August 2009): [nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov)
- <sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Wise Woman Tip Sheets*, (August 2009): [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
- <sup>6</sup> Michael Donovan, National Cancer Institute, *Too Busy to Exercise? Simple Ways to Be More Active*, (January 2008): [cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov)
- <sup>7</sup> Weight-control Information Network, *Tips to Help You Get Active*, (January 2009): [win.niddk.nih.gov](http://win.niddk.nih.gov)

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