

Keep exercise on your to-do list

We've all been taught from a young age to fit in a little regular exercise. You know it's good for both your body and your mind. But when your day gets busy, it's too easy to skip. When you get out of the daily habit, it's hard to pick it back up. It's true, there are real road blocks to exercising, and lack of time is just one of them. But you can get through these road blocks and fit exercise into your day — at home or at the office.



Main ways to exercise

A well-balanced exercise program has three parts. Try to add a little of each to your exercise routine.

- **Aerobic activity** uses your large muscle groups 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 your muscles and makes them stronger. It also helps your balance and movement. Resistance training involves moves like lunges, chest presses and bicep curls.
- **Flexibility exercises** stretch and lengthen your muscles. They also help keep your joints limber. Yoga is just one way to stay flexible.

Working out at home

You don't need much to workout in your home — just some floor space and a few items. Here are a few tips:

- **For strength training:** Use a set of dumbbells, resistance bands, kettlebells or even your own body weight.
- **For resistance training:** You don't need equipment to do exercises like pushups and crunches — just yourself. Keep a focus on changing up your routine. For training ideas, search online for at-home workouts.
- **For aerobic activity:** Try walking, jogging, running, riding a bike, playing tennis, swimming laps or playing basketball.
- **For turnkey workouts:** Try an app like Sworkit, which lets you customize and play video workouts on your mobile device.

It's easy to work out anywhere at home. You might even find yourself exercising while doing everyday household tasks, such as:

- Washing and waxing a car
- Raking leaves
- Vacuuming and cleaning
- Shoveling snow
- Gardening

Your office workout

If you work in an office, you might sit for hours on the phone or in meetings. Luckily, staying active at the office is only a matter of doing small bouts of exercise throughout the day. You may not be able work out a full half-hour, but all of your small steps add up.</p>
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While on the job, try:

- Using the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walking to your co-worker's office instead of emailing or phoning.
- Walking to the break room and back.
- Using the stairs to the bathroom one flight up.
- Looking away from the screen every 30 minutes or so to stretch. Roll your shoulders, arch your back, stand up and stretch your legs.
- Walking at the airport while on a trip for work. Or if you're driving, pull off at a park or a rest stop and take a five-minute walk.

Before and after work try:

- Parking far away from the front door.
- Looking for a spot at your job where you can walk at lunch, during breaks or after work.
- Bringing exercise clothes with you, so you can walk or jog nearby.

What's your reason for not working out?

Below are some excuses — and ways to beat them:

Problem: With work, family and other demands, I'm too busy to exercise.

Answer: Make staying active a priority each day. Carve time out of your day. Try before or after work, or on your lunch hour. Then put it in your day planner.

Problem: Using a treadmill or stationary bike is boring.

Answer: Try watching TV or listening to music 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.

Answer: You don't have to be an athlete to be active. Walking and hiking are great choices because they're easy, low-cost and no training is needed. The key to staying active isn't putting in long hours at the gym. It's about making the most out of the everyday things you do.

Why exercise?

Seven benefits of regular physical activity:

1. Weight management
2. Combat health conditions and diseases
3. Improve your mood
4. Boost energy levels
5. Better quality sleep
6. Improve physical intimacy
7. It can be fun and social

Choose your move

Easier activities

- Easy trail hike
- Light gardening
- Dancing
- Playing golf
- Bicycling at a leisurely pace
- Walking 10 to 20 minutes
- Swimming

Harder activities

- Running/jogging
- Bicycling quickly
- Walking a half hour or more
- Heavy yard work
- Basketball
- Jumping rope
- Soccer

Source: Mayo Clinic website: Exercise: 7 benefits of regular physical activity (accessed February 2014): mayoclinic.org
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