



Thinking of being more active?

I have a busy work life and my job requires that I sit a lot. Between my job and my family, I do not have any room for exercise. I'd like to try to include some physical activity but I don't know how to find the time. I feel overwhelmed with how to begin.

Sounds like you'd like to make a positive change in your health -- congratulations! That's the first step. Start by making small behavior changes that can later become long-term goals. Identify ways you can work around the barriers and place motivating messages around your home and/or office.

How Active Are You?

The US Surgeon General recommends that we accumulate 30 minutes (60 minutes for children and adolescents) of moderate physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. That's just three, 10-minute brisk walks per day.

Why do I need to be physically active?

From Day One of becoming more physically active, your body will reap the benefits! Immediate benefits of physical activity include:

- Feeling better
- Increased energy level and alertness
- Increased quality of sleep
- Decreased anxiety and stress
- Increased calories burned



Try these ideas for starters:

- Turn off your TV. Almost anything is more active than watching TV. If you choose to watch TV, do crunches, jumping jacks or stretches during the commercial breaks and get rid of the remote control.
- Play catch with your kids or go for a walk with your dog.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator whenever possible. If it seems too far to take all of the stairs, take the elevator for a few flights and then use the stairs.
- Park your car away from the mall, grocery store or your worksite destination and make a habit of walking the difference in distance everywhere you go.

- Put on upbeat music and do household chores that require lifting and bending.
- Walk or stretch while talking on the phone, brushing your teeth or doing other daily tasks.
- Take frequent stretch breaks from sitting. Try standing up and sitting down quickly 25 times in a row.
- Go dancing.
- Hand deliver messages rather than using interoffice mail, e-mail or phone.
- Trade in your power mower for a push mower and snow blower for a snow shovel.

How can I get motivated?

- See your doctor. Many times a check-up will remind you that you need to be physically active. Ask your doctor for exercise recommendations. Often advice from professionals is all we need to get moving.
- Set a realistic goal, write it down, and post it where you will see it frequently.
- Things like cost and time often feel like obstacles to getting started but they can be worked out. Start by making small adjustments in the areas that seem to be barriers. Setting the alarm 20 minutes earlier in the morning to go for a walk around the block gives you 20 minutes of activity before your day even begins and costs nothing.
- Constantly remind yourself of the benefits. Learn more and get quick tips at www.fitday.com, www.fitness.com, and www.howtobefit.com.

