

# Living Right<sup>®</sup>

Your Health and Wellness Awareness Bulletin

May 2019



## Do anything!

### You'll benefit from even short bouts of activity

If you're looking to do something good for your health today, get up and move around.

A new study found that replacing 30 minutes of sitting with half an hour of any type of movement helps your health.

Don't worry about setting aside half an hour at one time or increasing your heart rate to a certain number; benefits kick in if you move for any amount of time or at any intensity level.



That's not to say there are not benefits to more intense periods of exercise; regular physical activity is associated with stronger muscles, a lower risk of diabetes, and a longer life. In addition, doing activities that make you huff and puff has been linked to good mental health and lower rates of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes in older adults.

There are also benefits however, to simply getting out of your chair for a few minutes at a time. Research has found that adults who sat for an hour or more without interruption had a greater risk of early death than those who moved more often.

This study of 8,000 adults, published recently in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, found that movement doesn't have to be intense or for a long period of time in order to be beneficial; even moving for a minute or two has a positive effect on health.

Additional benefits were gained when activity was more vigorous. Study participants who swapped 30 minutes of sitting time for low-intensity physical activity lowered their risk of death by 17 percent. When sitting was replaced with moderate to vigorous activity, the risk of early death dropped by 35 percent.



So don't be discouraged from exercising because you think you need to train for a marathon or complete an excruciating cross training circuit for your efforts to be effective. While intense activity is great for those who enjoy and are motivated by it, there are important gains to be made by simply moving more each day.

## What's moderate activity?

During moderate bouts of exercise, breathing and heart rate increase, but you can still carry on a conversation. This includes:

- A brisk walk (15-minute mile)
- Light yard work
- Biking at a casual pace
- Hiking
- Dancing



## What's vigorous activity?

Your heart rate increases substantially, and you're breathing so hard you can't carry on a conversation. This includes:

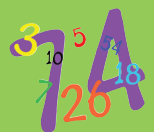
- Jogging or running
- Swimming laps
- Jumping rope
- Competitive sports (soccer, basketball, football)



## By the numbers

1 in 4 adults spends more than eight hours a day sitting.

Source: JAMA



## Make the most of fitness tech

Wrist-worn fitness devices or running watches, and the online apps and websites they're paired with, can be a great way to track your steps, heart rate, and much more, and their reminders and goal-oriented features can encourage you to put more exercise into your day.

These devices are filled with a variety of options, and it can be easy to overlook some great features. To get the most out of your fitness device and a better picture of your activity level, try these tips:



**Get personal:** Enter accurate information for your height, weight, and age in your profile on the tracker's app or website. It might be tempting to fudge the numbers, but don't. Accurate information will help the device deliver more precise calculations.



**Set stride length:** This will help ensure that your device is accurately counting your steps and tracking distance. If you're doing a swimming workout, set the pool length.



**Decide which wrist:** Wearing the device on your non-dominant hand could give you a more accurate reading, as the additional movement from your dominant hand might impact the data that's recorded. Your device may also have a setting that allows you to select whether it's being worn on the dominant or non-dominant hand.



**Use reminders:** Setting reminders is a great way to prompt yourself to move every hour or half hour.



**Join a group:** Become part of a group to offer and receive encouragement and motivation to keep moving.



**Be cautious about calories:** The calorie burn numbers on fitness devices may not be accurate. An individual's calorie burn depends on many variables, and it's difficult for a device to take them all into account. Don't let a high number be the reason for indulging in a big piece of chocolate cake or another decadent treat. Enjoy treats in moderation, and be aware that it's not a bad idea to climb some extra stairs or take another walk around the parking lot if you're looking to burn a set number of calories in a day.

## Too busy for a workout? Try an exercise snack

If your fitness goal is to improve heart health, there's likely an easy exercise option nearby.

Hitting the nearest staircase a few times a day for an "exercise snack" is an effective workout, according to research published in *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*.

Study participants vigorously climbed three flights of stairs three times a day and had rest periods of one to four hours between climbing sessions. The participants, who were otherwise sedentary, did this three times a week, and improved their heart health and strength as a result.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends doing at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week, or a mixture of the two, and doing strength training activities twice a week. More benefits are gained by doing more than 300 minutes of activity, but the CDC also notes that any amount of moderate to vigorous activity will provide health benefits.

## Goals provide exercise motivation

Whether you're looking to improve your fitness level or simply want to get off the couch and start moving, setting exercise goals can help.

Goals give you something to strive for and accomplishments to savor. To make sure they're effective, you can use the SMART goal process.

A **SMART** goal is:

**S**pecific. A goal of exercising more is admirable, but you should think about the details. How often will you exercise? What will you do? When will you do it?

**M**easurable. Set a goal that you can track. You might want to walk 8,000 steps a day, for example, or exercise five days a week.

**A**ttainable. Know yourself and your abilities. If you've never run before, trying to run five miles each day will likely leave you tired, sore, and frustrated. If you're just starting a fitness program and have health concerns, talk to your doctor about activities that are right for you.

**R**ealistic. Think about what you can work into your schedule and set aside time on your calendar to accomplish it.

**T**imely. Aim to reach your goal within a certain amount of time. Perhaps you want to run a 5K at end of the summer. To reach this goal, set weekly goals to build up your endurance.

Next month:  
Driving Safety



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