

Quick Tips: Fitting Physical Activity Into Your Day

Get started

You may not even realize that many of the things you do during the day are ways for you to meet your physical activity needs. Many household chores, for example, will get your heart rate going faster. A faster heartbeat is what defines moderate-level activity.

Experts say to do 2½ hours of moderate activity a week. Moderate activity means things like brisk walking, brisk cycling, or shooting baskets. But any activities—including daily chores—that raise your heart rate can be included. Many of us are so busy that fitting in physical activity can seem impossible on most days.

Here's some good news: It doesn't have to be a certain amount each day. It's fine to do blocks of 10 minutes or more throughout your day and week.

Here are some ideas for fitting short bursts of activity into your day:

At home

- Take a few 10-minute walks or bike rides during the day.
- Use an exercise DVD for a little while in the morning and a little while in the evening.
- Turn up the music and dance while you vacuum.
- Take a 10-minute dance break with your young children.
- Push the lawn mower, rake leaves, or shovel snow.
- Give the kitchen floor a good scrubbing.
- Wash the car, clean the garage, or wash windows.
- Play Frisbee, hopscotch, or jump rope with children.
- Walk or bike to the store.
- Walk the dog.
- Read the newspaper on a stationary bike.

At work

- Use your commute to do some extra walking. Park several blocks away, or get off the bus a few stops early.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator, at least for a few floors.
- Suggest holding meetings with colleagues during a walk inside or outside the building.
- Go the extra distance when possible: Get your coffee on another floor (use the stairs) or use the restroom that's the farthest from your office.
- If you need to speak to a coworker, walk to that person's office or station rather than using e-mail or the phone.
- Use your morning and afternoon breaks to take quick 15-minute walks.