

[IMAGE]

How To Fit In Fitness

By Staff Editorial

Current exercise recommendations call for 30 minutes or more of moderate physical activity, five days per week. Sound impossible? Not when you consider there are 1,440 minutes in a day. Can't you take a mere two percent of your time and devote it to staying in shape? If you think it's not that easy, think again. These days, there are plenty of ways to exercise on a daily basis, no matter how busy you are. And that's good news, because overwhelming evidence suggests consistent physical activity has a variety of health benefits, including reducing stress, improving heart health, and lowering the risk of developing diabetes, cancer and other life-threatening conditions. Here are a few simple suggestions to help overcome barriers (perceived or real) to physical activity, courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov):

Timing is everything. Monitor your daily activities for one week, and then identify at least three 30-minute time slots per day that you could devote to physical activity. Then commit to filling one of those daily windows with exercise. Maintain a calendar so you don't "forget" your daily fitness responsibility.

Support makes sense. Make sure your friends and family know you are dedicated to consistent physical activity, and ask for their support. You can recruit others to join you, too, which will make it much easier to stay focused, especially on those inevitable "down days" when you aren't in the mood to do anything except sit on the couch.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Rest your brain (and bank account).* Lack of knowledge and lack of money are two of the top reasons people give for not exercising. Don't let either of these excuses distract you from your goal. There are plenty of activities that don't require particular skill or cash, such as walking, cycling, jumping rope or swimming. You can even park farther from work and walk the rest of the way; you'll save on gas *and* get in shape.

Don't be afraid to multitask. No, that *doesn't* mean you should try to do the bills or plan the family holiday party during your designated 30-minute exercise window. It *does* mean you can jump rope while watching TV, wrestle with the kids, take a family bike ride (which is good exercise for everyone), or do housework or gardening.

So, now that you know how to fit in fitness, what are you waiting for? Find the time, stay on course and enjoy a healthier, happier life. There's no better time than now to start.

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