

[IMAGE]

## **Exercise at Work**

By Julie T. Chen, MD

I know that most of us don't have the luxury of dedicating our every waking hour to exercise. Instead, we find ourselves mostly behind our desks from nine to five, five days out of the week trying to figure out how to even fit in the time for grocery shopping or running errands, let alone finding time for exercise. But, there are ways to fit exercise into our nine to five...and here's how.

I'll give you some examples of how some employees in the companies I used to do corporate wellness for used to fit in exercise into their day.

One employee wanted to lose weight and so since she was only able to get to her personal trainer once or twice per week, she started to be creative in implementing strengthening exercise opportunities into her work space.

She got rid of her chair and got a balance ball as her seat and after a few weeks of using that as her chair, her core strength significantly improved according to her personal trainer at their workout sessions. She also had light hand weights and ankle weights in her work cubicle so that when she is using her phone head-set for conference calls, she could do light strength training with her legs and her arms while she was working.

Even if you didn't have a balance ball for a chair, you can do gluteal squeezes while sitting at your desk. You can perform these every hour or two or you can stand up and stretch and do some squats or lunges. When you set your mind towards the goal of making sure you stay active even at work, you'd be surprised at how many things you come up with for exercises while at work.

Besides strength training, many employees make it a priority to find time to incorporate cardio exercises into their work day. Some of them would take the stairs instead of the elevators and park farther in the parking lot just so that they can get some extra cardio into their day.

These activities not only help you to tone up and become lean, but they are great as stress relievers as well. Consider asking some work colleagues to form a noon time walking group so that you guys can get in a few laps around the office building or block to help with stress management as well as getting in some daily

exercise. Finally, one of the easiest ways to add more steps into your work day is to walk to your colleagues office for discussions rather than calling them on the phone.

When you set your mind to it, you can always find some method for incorporating activity into your work day. This way, if you end up working late on any given day, you don't have to feel as defeated about missing that gym class you had wanted to go to because you had already been working out in various other ways during the day at work. And all those exercises at the office helps to relieve stress as well, so you might just find yourself going home that day feeling a little lighter on your feet without all that stress weighing you down.

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