

[IMAGE]

Put Health Into Motion

By Jasper Sidhu, BSc, DC

If you spend the majority of your day in a vehicle, a chair or the couch, you really don't know what you're missing - but your body does, which is why inactivity increases the risk of cancer, heart disease and other significant health problems. Learn why the simple act of movement is so important to your health and how easy it can be to put your health into motion every day.

Recent research from the European Space Agency evaluated what 45 days of bed rest would do to the human body. Initially, I was amused. Of course 45 days of bed rest isn't good for the body! However, the more I thought about it, something else became clear. Most of my patients don't ask me what *other* forms of exercise they can do; most are not doing *any* form of exercise, either because they can't or because they have a perception that they have to do a considerable amount to get any benefit.

Too many people (are you one?) believe intense exercise is the only way to make a difference in their health. Eventually, that path becomes frustrating, exhausting and draining, and we end up doing nothing at all. So, the key issue is not really the type or intensity of exercise, but why you need to start moving. It's a simple issue of motion versus no motion. It's shocking to realize how many health problems are caused by not doing anything. It all boils down to putting your health into motion by putting *yourself* in motion. Let's take a closer look.

Death by Couch

rolling ball - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Whenever we hear about someone close to us getting cancer, we pray that it doesn't happen to us. As a result, we may change our diet, try to alter an unhealthy behavior (e.g., quit smoking), reduce our stress levels, etc.; however, one thing we don't change often enough is our activity level. It's shocking to truly grasp how much of an impact being sedentary has on our health. In fact, being inactive is more dangerous to your health than smoking!

In one study, one in five deaths in people 35 years or older was attributed to a lack of physical activity. The risk of developing cancer increased 45 percent for men who didn't include any physical activity in their life and 28 percent for women who were inactive. Risk of dying from respiratory diseases was 92 percent higher

for inactive men and 75 percent higher for inactive women. Risk of heart disease was 52 percent higher for inactive men and 28 percent higher for inactive women.

Those are scary numbers, especially if you consider the culprit: lack of movement. The solution is equally simple: start moving. It's about getting motion back in your life if you've stopped moving or are you're slowing down a bit. I'm not necessarily talking about going to the gym and lifting heavy weights, or training for a marathon. I'm talking about getting up and moving around - every day.

Cardio and Strength Training: Easier Than You Think

Yes, simply moving around and staying active can help prevent disease. Does it have to involve doing an intense workout? In a word, *no*. Making small changes to your lifestyle can have an enormous impact when it comes to your health.

Cardio Movements: When someone hears about exercise and heart health, they get visions of grueling one-hour treadmill workouts. However, if your goal is to establish some form of motion and activity, the minimum recommendations are actually 30 minutes a day. This 30 minutes does not have to be done at once. You can break it up into three 10-minute sessions. Heading to work or the mall? Park a few minutes away and walk the rest of the way. Going for lunch at work? Take the stairs after you finish. Or simply walk over to a fellow worker's office instead of phoning them. If you are home most of the time, walk while you talk on the phone. You'd be surprised how much activity you can get doing this. In short, there are literally thousands of ways to move throughout even the busiest day. It's about prioritizing movement in an increasingly sedentary world.

Most people should be able to fit those 30 minutes a day into their schedule, no matter how busy they *think* they are. What if you absolutely can't? The good news is that you can have positive effects on your health with as little as 7 minutes of exercise a week! Don't get too excited. This usually means doing shorter intervals of activity, but doing it at an highly intense level. A study in England showed that only 7 minutes of total exercise per week for two weeks improved insulin action. Other studies have shown that 4 minutes of high-intensity exercise at one time can increase cardiovascular fitness. The point is that when it comes to movement, a little can go a long way to get you back on track. Any movement at all is better than none, especially over time.

Strength training movements: Strength training does not mean joining the muscle guys at Venice Beach. Simple strength exercises with your body weight can be beneficial. The general recommendation is to do eight to 10 strength-training exercises with 10 to 15 repetitions of each exercise, two to three times per week. If you don't have weights, you can use your body weight. Simply do squats against the wall, or do a push-up against the edge of a table. Remember, the key is to start off small and work your way up.

ball arrow - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark When I ask patients why they aren't doing any strength training, a common response is that they can't lift heavy weights or that their body can't handle the physical stress. Unfortunately, the constant images of Hulk-like individuals working out has contributed to a lot of misinformation out there. Many people believe they need to lift heavy weights to see some changes in their muscles. Research is actually showing that high-repetition exercises with lower-weight loads can be as good, if not better, than heavy lifting. Therefore, don't rule out weight training because you can't handle heavy weights. A recent study from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, revealed that an exercise program using a low weight load, but high volume of exercise, produced better results than lifting heavier weights. The message: If you want to increase muscle strength and tone, and get the benefits associated with strength training, simply start out with lighter weights and do as many reps as you can until you can't do any more.

Get Up and Get Moving

I know I'm repeating myself here, but that's because it's so important (and because so many people don't seem to get it these days): When it comes to movement, *any* type of movement can be beneficial and is definitely better than not moving at all; after all, research suggests being sedentary can be as detrimental as smoking over time. The goal is not to run a marathon (unless that's your goal), but rather to introduce new ways to get up and move every day. The health benefits are just too great to overlook the power of movement. If you "get up and go" regularly, keep up the good work! It's doing you and your body a world of good. If you need to move more (or at all), what are you waiting for? Take the first steps toward better health and a better you today; you won't regret it.

Enjoy the Benefits of MOVEMENT

Cardiovascular exercise and strength training are two important ways to get your body moving and reap the important health benefits, including but certainly not limited to:

weights - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Cardio Movements:

- Helps maintain healthy weight
- Reduces blood pressure
- Reduces risk of diabetes
- Increases endurance and energy
- Helps cope with stress
- Helps maintain mental fitness

Strength Training Movements:

- Fewer injuries due to stronger muscles
 - Tones your muscles
 - Increases energy
 - Strengthens bones and decreases
 - Risk of osteoporosis
 - Decreases resting blood pressure
 - Decreases arthritis pain
-

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