

[IMAGE]

Put On Your Walking Shoes

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Many people balk at the idea of daily exercise. I think it's because we now equate exercise with getting into work out gear and going to a gym...otherwise we think it's not exercise. But that is far from the truth.

Walking is a great form of exercise, and guess what? We do it every day without having to get into work out gear or paying an expensive membership to a gym. Studies show that we tend to walk more when we are in comfortable shoes. So yes, you will probably have to invest in some comfortable shoes but you can walk anywhere at any time, without a gym membership.

To get some of the patients I work with started, I usually like my patients to just get into the habit of taking the stairs and walking to their destination instead of driving; just so that they can get into the habit of moving more on a daily basis. However, if you are able to carve out a set amount of time daily to speed walk, that would be additionally beneficial on top of increasing daily activities like taking stairs and parking farther from your destination.

Even though we walk on a daily basis as soon as we get out of bed, we probably take it for granted and don't think enough about the health benefits of walking. Walking is beneficial for vascular circulation, heart and brain functioning, de-stressing, improving muscle strength in our legs, improving balance, and decreasing risk of falls. Beyond these basic benefits, walking also helps your bowel function so you're not constipated, improves sugar control by making your body more efficient with exercise and keeping the weight off, and improves lung functioning.

walking exercise - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark So, as you can see, the body and mental health benefits are numerous when it comes to walking. And to think, we already do it naturally around the house and at work. Now, we just have to try to remember to increase the amount of time we do this, whether at work or at home.

Here are five tips to help you increase your walking time during the day:

1. Park farther from your destination and walk the rest of the way.
2. Take the stairs at work instead of the elevator.
3. Walk to the person you are trying to communicate with instead of sending them an email or text.
4. Take a walk at lunch time to de-stress and get in some exercise.
5. Make it a family tradition to take a walk before or after dinner to increase family bonding and exercise time.

For more information on walking and your health, talk to your chiropractor.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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