

Small Steps to Increase Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is essential for good health and happiness.

People with very active jobs (i.e. construction worker, mail carrier) and those who frequently exercise typically reach the weekly recommended activity level of 150 minutes. However, the majority of Americans do not reach this amount because they either have less active jobs or are simply not ready to commit to an exercise routine (or both). If you need be more active, make sure that you are always on the lookout for little ways to move more.

Here are 35 small ways to increase physical activity throughout your day:

- 1) Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- 2) Park farther away from the front door
- 3) Stand instead of sitting (this burns more calories)
- 4) Take a walk on your lunch break
- 5) Walk or bike to your destination instead of driving
- 6) Sit on an exercise ball at your desk instead of a chair (this builds core strength)
- 7) Do stretches or ride a stationary bike while watching TV
- 8) During commercial breaks do abdominal crunches, jumping jacks, push-ups, or simply get up and walk around
- 9) Take a 10 minute walk in the morning and/or evening
- 10) Play outside with your kids
- 11) Take the baby or kids for a stroller or wagon ride
- 12) Walk or run as your kids ride their bikes
- 13) Instead of sitting, walk around while watching your child's sporting event
- 14) Take your dog for a walk (if you already do this, try making the walk longer or faster)
- 15) Do squats or lunges while waiting for your food to cook in the microwave
- 16) Do a few squats while brushing your teeth
- 17) Do calf raises while getting ready in front of the bathroom mirror
- 18) Take a walk when you are frustrated or bored (instead of eating)
- 19) Plant a garden
- 20) Maintain your garden (weeding, pruning, etc.)
- 21) Go for a walk with a friend instead of meeting for coffee
- 22) Have "walking meetings" at work when meeting with small groups of people (instead of meeting in a room, get up and walk around while talking)
- 23) Keep hand weights at your desk. Do bicep and tricep exercises while on phone calls
- 24) Turn on the music and dance around the house
- 25) Instead of making piles around the house, put things back in their place right away
- 26) Do house work regularly
- 27) Wash the car by hand instead of the drive-through car wash
- 28) Take an extra walk through the grocery store aisles before you check out
- 29) Get off the bus one stop early and walk to your destination
- 30) Shovel instead of using the snowblower
- 31) Rake leaves instead of using a leaf blower
- 32) Walk through your golf game instead of driving a cart
- 33) Get up and walk around after sitting for 30 minutes
- 34) Take a short walk on your lunch break
- 35) Wear a good quality pedometer and aim for 10,000 steps per day