



Enhancing People. Improving Business.

How to Fit Exercise into Your Workday

Let's get moving!

The basics

Most of us know it's not good for our health to sit all day, but many jobs involve hours of sitting. Many of us work long hours then have family and home responsibilities once we leave work. When it comes to exercise, you have more at stake than a desire for a slimmer waistline or less generous hips. Having a sedentary lifestyle increases your risk for coronary heart disease.

Is there a way to be productive at work and home while still getting the physical exercise we need each day?

--Consider incorporating exercise into your commute. Do you work close enough to walk or bike into work? If not, consider getting off at a farther bus stop or park a few blocks away and walk or bike from there. Discipline yourself to take the stairs or walk the long way to your desk each day.

--Having a place to exercise during lunch can be a real bonus, especially for those with children who may find it difficult to exercise before or after work.

How can I get more exercise at work?

- 1. Stand up at work** — While on the phone, stand or pace. Take a stretching break by extending your arms over your head or swinging your arms side to side. Try a twist at your waist or a triceps stretch to waken up your body and mind.
- 2. Take fitness breaks** — Taking a quick walk around the building, a few hikes up and down the stairs, or even a few squats or lunges at your desk can get your blood pumping to beat an afternoon slump in the time it would take to get a cup of coffee.
- 3. Keep fitness gear nearby** — Having a set of dumbbells or elastic bands at your desk can make fitting exercise into your workday easier. Repping out a few bicep curls while on the phone or performing some abductor moves with the band around your ankles can be done while typing on your computer. Many exercises can be done without taking you away from your work. It may be as simple as establishing a routine in your workday.

Exercise enables us to soak in more information, work more efficiently, and be more productive.

There are many cognitive benefits that impact our performance including:

- Improved concentration
- Sharper memory
- Faster learning
- Mental stamina
- Enhanced creativity
- Lower stress

Lunch time workout motivation

If you have a workout facility or gym at your workplace, be sure to take advantage of it. Usually this is offered as a free service. If you pack your lunch, you will save the time you usually spend driving and waiting for food to be prepared. This time saved will give you the time to workout at lunch. Even if you do not have a designated workout space within your building, going for a run or finding a nearby tennis court or gym will still allow you to use your lunch time to improve your health.

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind that will help you stay motivated to workout at lunch time:

1. Choose physical activities that you enjoy doing —

You are more likely to stick with an exercise routine if you choose activities that you enjoy.

2. Work out with a buddy —

Having someone hold you accountable helps you to show up on days you don't feel like it. You will have opportunities to return the favor with your friend as well. In addition to strengthening your health, you can strengthen relationships through this shared experience.

3. Set goals — Instead of just exercising for a set time or even a set numbers of days, set an achievement goal so that you feel that you are working towards something. Train for a race, a level of flexibility, or a weight to lift. Set realistic goals and benchmarks along the way to get yourself to your goal.

4. Participate in group activities — Consider participating in a sport, like doubles tennis, where others depend on you. This will help keep you motivated to show up.

5. Bring your lunch — if you know you have a healthy lunch ready to eat after your workout, you will not feel like you need the time to run out and get lunch. It's already there.

6. Keep a set of workout clothes at work — The easiest excuse to not workout at lunch is that you have the wrong clothes or shoes. Always keep an extra set of active clothes and shoes at work.

7. High intensity for a shorter duration — Results keep us motivated. If you have limited time to work out, make the best use of it. If you are cleared by your doctor to do so, workout at a higher intensity so you gain the same benefit in less time. For example, run for 30 minutes instead of walking for 60.

You got this

Active lives may require a little creativity in the beginning. Once you find a system that works for you, make it a routine. Consistent exercise will reap the biggest reward. Most of us have busy lives. It may be very easy to come up with reasons why you can't fit exercise in your daily routine, but with a little effort and determination, you will be able to come up with solutions on how to fit exercise in your life. Your increased productivity and improved mood will make the time invested in your health well worth it.