

News Release From:
University of Missouri Extension
Northwest Region

For More Information Contact:
Janet M. Hackert,
Regional Nutrition and Health Education Specialist

Make Time to Be Physically Active

*By Janet Hackert, Regional Nutrition and Health Education Specialist
University of Missouri Extension*

Has your New Year's resolution to be more physically active blown right out the window with the gusty winter weather? If so, find time again to exercise, stay/get fit and be ready for spring and summer fun that requires your strength and endurance before it gets here.

Figure out what is keeping you from taking the time to exercise. Here are some possible options for finding the time.

Prioritize. Make your physical activity a top priority. Make it the first activity of the day. Get up earlier to fit it in. Or plan to stay up a little later after the rest of the household is settled in for the night.

Make the activity a habit. Commit to performing your chosen exercise program in the same way or at the same time over and over. After a while, it will become a habit and will seem odd if it does NOT happen, like having a meal or brushing your teeth.

Find an exercise partner. Walking, dancing or going to an exercise class can be more fun – and more likely to happen – when done with someone else. The other person can remind and encourage you when you don't feel like exercising or simply forget or get too busy. Dogs make great exercise coaches too, relentlessly begging to go for a walk and keep you moving.

Find an alternative activity. When weather or health concerns keep you from your routine activity, have an alternate ready so you can stay active every day.

Fit activity into life. The USDA recommends 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week. If these 2½ hours seem like more time than you have to spare, they also say 75 minutes of vigorous activity is its equivalent. That means your heart is beating hard and your breathing is such that you can still speak but only a few words at a time. It means working harder, but the bonus is that it takes less of your time that is so precious.

For those who are more athletic to begin with, an even shorter and yet very effective workout is called high-intensity interval training (HIT). This method involves extremely intense, and very short, bursts of activity, even for a matter of 30 seconds to five minutes at a time, followed by lower intensity activity or “rest” for a short time. So the overall workout takes very little time.

-more-

Whether a person chooses to engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity or to try high-intensity interval training, what is done the rest of the day is also important. “Every time you move around rather than sit, you challenge your heart to beat a little faster, training it to be stronger and fitter,” says Dr. Miriam Nelson, professor at Tufts University’s Friedman School in the February 2014 issue of Tufts University Health and Nutrition Letter. Make choices that include movement – parking a little farther from the door when shopping or going to work, taking a short walk instead of sitting during breaks at work, or even standing instead of sitting at a ball game. In a recent study looking at older Americans’ habits, a person was about a third “less likely to suffer a first-time cardiovascular event” if they were involved in non-sedentary leisure activity.

We all know it is important and beneficial to be physically active. Figure out what is keeping you from just doing it and choose one of these options or another solution that is most likely to work for you. Make the time and get moving.

For more information on making time to be physically active, or any other topic, contact me at 660-425-6434 or HackertJ@missouri.edu or your local University of Missouri Extension office.