

Healthy Fitness

You don't need to be an Olympic athlete to be in good shape. And you don't need to spend hours at the gym or buy expensive exercise equipment either. There are simple things that you can do every day to make fitness a bigger part of your life. And most of these things take little time and are free.



What's the big deal?

Regular physical activity will make you live longer and will improve your overall health. How? For starters, regular exercise can greatly reduce your risk for developing chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. It can also improve the symptoms of conditions you may already have. As an added bonus, when you make exercise part of your daily routine, you feel better about yourself and have more energy!

Try to spend 20 to 30 minutes every day doing something that gets your heart rate up. It will make a big difference in how you feel today...and tomorrow.

Can fitness really be easy?

Yes! Walking offers the easiest, least expensive way to work out for most people. And, with every step you take, you are one step closer to better health.

- Walk to work or school if it is not too far.
- Instead of taking the elevator, take the stairs.
- Wake up half an hour earlier than you normally do and head outside for a brisk walk or light jog.
- Get off the bus one stop early, and walk the rest of the way home.
- Park a little further from home or work than you normally do.

Can fitness really be fun?

Yes! When you can't stand the thought of hopping on the treadmill, find an activity you've always wanted to do, and give it a try.

- Want to learn how to salsa or swing dance? Sign up for a dance class.
- Always been a fan of The Karate Kid? Give karate or kickboxing a try.
- Miss the days when you were the star of your sports team? Join a soccer, softball, or basketball team...or organize your own with co-workers, friends, or family members.
- Wondering what Pilates and yoga are all about? Borrow a book or video from the library, and see for yourself.

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Need that extra push?

If you let friends and family in on your health and fitness kick, you are more likely to stick to your plan.

- Set up gym, walking, running, or biking “dates” with a friend.
- Keep family members or friends in the loop about your fitness goals.
- Ask the people you care about—and who care about you—for encouragement.

Can't remember the last time you exercised?

People who go from a sedentary lifestyle to one which includes moderate amounts of physical activity benefit most from exercise. So what are you waiting for? No matter what you do, it's important that you start out slowly if you have been inactive for a long period of time. A good way to measure whether you are working too hard is if you are unable to carry on a conversation. If you can't talk—slow down your walk!

Don't think you have time to exercise?

Break up your exercise into smaller segments of time—perhaps, 15 minutes of brisk walking in the morning and 20 minutes of gardening or another physical activity in the evening. Keeping a daily activity record might help you to remember your daily workout.

Remember, any amount of exercise is better than none at all!

Even if you only have a few minutes of free time, challenge yourself to do something active every day. Take the stairs. Walk around the block. Do some jumping jacks. Just do something!



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