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Newsletter 2020

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Be Well Aware – Health Article



Finding Your “Fit” in a Busy Schedule

What is fitness?

Throughout our busy days, there are many things that can claim our time. It can often be hard to find time for fitness. So what is fitness? The definition of fitness is “the ability to survive and reproduce”. Physical fitness is defined as “good health and strength achieved through exercise.” Neither of these are very specific and so fitness can be different for every single person.

Finding your fit may need to start with discovering what fitness is for you. Does that mean you can run a marathon? Squat 500 pounds? Play with your kids or grandkids? Maybe tie your shoes and stand up without losing your breath?

Once you know what your goal for fitness is you can plan and strategize how to fit it into your schedule.

Tips for finding your fit

- Break it down into shorter increments. Research shows that exercising for 10-minutes, 3 times a day is just as effective as exercising for 30-minutes all at once. So go for a few short walks instead of one long one!

- Schedule your workouts. Even if you don’t workout at work, officially setting aside the time can help you stay accountable to yourself.
- Park your car in the back of the parking lot instead of the front to get some more steps. Take the stairs, ride your bike or walk to get places.
- Watching TV? Stand up, dance, lift weights or use resistance bands, ride a stationary bike or hop on a treadmill. Turn the football game into a game for you: field goal = stand for 3 minutes, touchdown = jog in place until the kickoff, turnover = 10 pushups!



*Continued on next page...*²

Want to get fit while socializing? Take a fitness class, go dancing, join a walking or sports club, play games with your kids or workout with a friend. This not only makes exercising more enjoyable but is also great at keeping you accountable!

Getting fit at work? Hold stand-up meetings instead of sit-downs, swap your chair for a stability ball, get up and walk for 2 minutes every hour, go to the copy machine on the other end of the floor.

The science of it all

Being active has a lot of benefits! But what if you can't be active for a long time? Can you still achieve higher energy levels, better concentration, lose weight, get stronger and have a healthier heart? Absolutely!

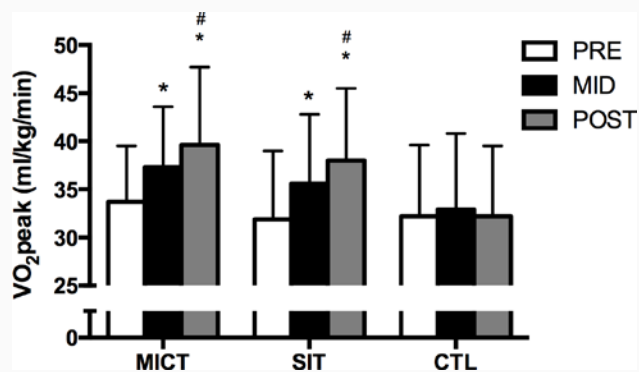
Training at high intensities for short periods has become a leading form of exercise. You might know it as HIIT (high-intensity interval training, AKA HIT), SIT (sprint interval training) or HIIIE (high-intensity interval exercise). They all mean the same thing; work as hard as you can for a little bit and then recover before doing it again.

This type of exercise can be done with cardio-based exercises like running or cycling, or it can be done as "body weight HIIT" which incorporates resistance exercises and calisthenics. All signs point to both methods being highly beneficial!

The graph shown to the right indicates how both moderate-intensity cardio training (MICT) and sprint interval training (SIT) greatly improved the cardiovascular fitness of participants in a 12-week program. The MICT group cycled for 45 minutes at one level of intensity while the SIT group exercised

for 5 minutes doing 3 sets of a 20-second all-out cycle sprint followed by 2 minutes of light cycling to recover.

The same study also looked at muscle activity and found that the SIT group had an increase of 48% compared to 27% in the MICT group. This could mean that training at very high intensities for short periods of time can be just as effective as long bouts of moderate-intensity for both cardio and strength improvements.



What does it all mean?

Getting fit doesn't need a wide-open schedule requiring you to spend hours at the gym every week. Improvements to your fitness level can be accomplished in as little as 10 minutes a day! And that is just how short the research shows, it could be 5 minutes or even 2! So take just a few minutes throughout the day and move as much as you can whether it is standing for a meeting, taking a walk around the floor, or performing a few high-intensity exercises!

References:

- <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0154075>
- <https://www.acsm.org/blog-detail/acsm-blog/2017/10/26/interval-based-exercise-many-names-possibilities>
- https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/t2/Participant-Module-10_Find_Time_for_Fitness.pdf

Exercise of the Month



Chair Squats at Your Desk

Purpose: Increase strength in the lower body and increase activity level throughout the day

Target Muscles: Quads, Hamstrings, Calves

Equipment Needed: Chair

Movement:

- Begin in a standing position with arms outstretched parallel to the floor and feet shoulder width apart
- Initiate the squat by pushing hips backwards toward the chair
- Keep the knees tracking in line with the toes as you descend
- Maintain a neutral spine, avoid looking up or tucking the chin
- Gently tap the chair, without putting your full weight on the seat
- Push through the whole foot to ascend back to standing

How to incorporate into your workday:

- Try and complete at least 3 sets throughout the day
- Feeling stagnant in creativity? Stop and do 10 reps
- Been sitting for more than an hour? Do 10 reps
- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed with multiple tasks? Do 10 reps



Health-Full Eating & Nutrition



Meal Planning for Your Workday

Eating While at work

If you've considered all the different ways time can be rendered at work, then you've acknowledged how elusive eating can be. Eating at work can be difficult with the ebb and flow of some office environments. Some people only eat breakfast, some might only eat lunch, and some might only eat dinner. We often have other responsibilities at work that steal our focus such as prepping for a last minute project or needing to address one more email. How do you prioritize eating while at work? Meal planning can help curb the affects from work dynamics and improve the quality of your meal time at work.¹ Simply put, meal planning is intentionally preparing meals to take with you somewhere.

Meal Planning & Intentional Eating

Eating at work is not always intentional because there are conveniences that most of us don't have at home like vending machines, office potlucks, and even the café. This can lead to passive eating and an increase in low nutrient foods due to the attention the day requires. When eating becomes

this way, it can act contrarily to the strides you may have already made or keep you from beginning to improve your nutrition. The control and peace food prepping gives you is superlative to any passive eating done at work.¹ Meal planning can definitely help you be more intentional about eating, whilst being less mentally occupied about what and when you're going to eat.

Why Meal Plan?

Eating out of the home is associated with a higher consumption of less nutritious calories and micronutrients.¹ Also, working more than 40 hours a week was found to be a barrier related to eating healthfully consistently.² It is hard to find time to make quality food because we are so tired. Throw in parenting and a spouse for some and it can really be a challenge.



Meal Planning Strategies

If you're finding yourself having a hard time intentionally eating while you're at work, try the following strategies to help meal plan for the day:

1. Pick food you enjoy and can eat frequently. For example, I eat eggs and don't get tired. There are plenty of quick and easy ways to make them too, and they're very nutritious.
2. Consider foods you already have to justify future grocery shopping, cut costs, and maximize convenience. Once it's time to restock you'll have an opportunity to stock your pantry with foods you are more likely to eat.
3. Once you find a recipe, consider the cooking resources you have at your workplace (microwave-ovens, refrigerators, etc.) and cook as much of your meal as you can at work.
4. Consider packing options and mix as much food as you can together to simplify packing, eating, improve flavor, and increase nutritional



density (otherwise make separate containers depending on the dish and personal preferences).

5. Consider the flow of your day and plan when you will eat so it does not get forgotten.

Main Take Away

Passive nutrition can be detrimental because it can lead to reaching for whatever is close and convenient. Maintaining and improving nutrition always comes down to being less about the quantity of food you eat and more about the quality of the food you eat. Reaching for convenient foods most of the time is like gassing your car up to only ¼ of a tank every time you get gas. If that's all you have to work with, you'd have to drive very conservatively because you can't go far. It is the same for your body, if you don't fuel it with quality fuel (nutrients & calories), you won't be able to go very far (with health & fitness) without being very conservative.

MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



References:

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22106948>
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