

The Wellness News

Issue 25, November 2009



Physical Activity in the Workplace

Do you have a hard time fitting in exercise during the work week? Feel like you are trapped behind your desk all day? With the sedentary jobs and long work days that many of us face, improving our fitness levels and increasing our overall activity can seem impossible. Luckily, research has shown that ten minutes of power walking, bicycling, or other moderate-intensity exercise two to three times a day can help your heart and mind. Here are some ideas for adding small bouts of exercise throughout your workday.

1) Add Cardiovascular Exercise

Aerobic exercise is an important component of your fitness program. It improves cardiovascular function, increases endorphin levels, relieves stress, and burns calories. Aim to fit in around 30-60 minutes per day for 5 days each week.

Prepare Your Workspace:

- Store a pair of comfortable shoes under your desk
- Keep a jump rope and a timer handy

- Bring a portable music player with music that gets you moving
- Make yourself accountable by inviting a coworker to join your planned cardio session

Cardio Exercise at Work:

- Bike or walk as part of your commute
- Plan a daily walk on your lunch break
- Set a reminder on your computer to take a ten minute cardio break every few hours. Try:
 - Jumping rope
 - Jogging or marching in place
 - Jumping jacks
 - Dancing
 - Walking up and down the stairs

Add extra activity to your work day by taking the stairs, delivering messages in person rather than through email, and standing while taking phone calls.

The Wellness News

More...

Physical Activity in the Workplace

2) Add Strength Training

Strength training at least twice each week improves bone strength, increases muscle tone, and boosts your metabolism. If you are trying to lose weight, strength training is crucial for preventing the loss of lean muscle mass and for increasing metabolism. Try incorporating 8-10 different strength training exercises into your routine every other day.

Prepare Your Workspace:

- Keep a resistance band in your desk
- Store dumbbells or a medicine ball under your desk
- Use a stability ball instead of a chair

Strength Training at Work:

- Try to incorporate at least one exercise for each major muscle group:
 - Chest
 - Back
 - Shoulders
 - Arms
 - Abs
 - Legs

- Perform a different strength training move between each work task or meeting.
- No equipment? Use your body weight: squats, pushups, lunges, tricep dips, crunches, and planks are all very effective exercises.
- While seated at your desk, sneak in some muscle toning: try tightening your abs, squeezing your glutes, or performing calf raises.
- To boost energy levels, forgo the coffee break and instead put together a few strength training moves for a quick circuit
 - Example: 10 squats, 10 wall pushups, 20 crunches. Repeat 1-3 times.
- Check out the WellFit tutorial for some specific strength training exercises to try.

3) Add Stretching

Often overlooked, stretching is a key component of any exercise routine. Stretching improves range of motion in your joints, keeps you flexible, improves circulation, and can even help correct poor posture. Make sure to stretch the major muscle groups at least three times each week, preferably after performing some sort of warm up (for example, marching in place).

Stretching at Work

- Use your time on the phone to stand up and stretch out your legs.
- Keep a post-it on your phone or computer, reminding you to sit up straight.
- Try some stretches while you sit:
 - Neck and shoulder rolls
 - Arm circles
 - Arch and tuck your back
 - Spinal twists



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320