

4 Fun Ways to Get Fit 10 Minutes at a Time

When asked what prevents them from enjoying the benefits of an active lifestyle, people report that obstacles are: (1) no time to fit fitness into their busy lives; (2) it isn't convenient to exercise; (3) it's boring to exercise; (4) it's hard to stay motivated; and (5) it hurts! If any of these reasons sound familiar to **YOU**, we have some great news from the world of medical research: **You really can get fit 10 minutes at a time.** No matter how busy your daily schedule is, you can probably find 10 minutes here or there - at your desks or around the house. A 10-minute dose of physical activity is not only do-able - it's also easy to stay motivated and hard to get bored in that short a time!

Enjoy 10-minute aerobic activities.

One easy way to get 10 minutes of heart-smart aerobic activity is to always have a comfortable pair of shoes nearby, like under your desk or in the car. This way you are ready to walk around the office, the mall, or the neighborhood whenever you have a few extra minutes. Not interested in walking? How about dancing to a few of your favorite tunes? Take 10 to rock around your house while vacuuming or to twirl around with a child (they usually like being "silly" to music!).

Enjoy 10-minute strength activities.

If you believe that a gym filled with machines and massive weight lifters is the only way to build muscle strength, think again. To make strength activities convenient, keep a small pair of hand weights (5 to 10 pounds depending on your current ability) near the telephone at work or home. This way you can strengthen your upper body while talking on the phone. A set of resistance bands also makes strength activities convenient at home, at work, or on the road.

Enjoy 10-minute stretching activities.

Yoga is another activity that doesn't need a special time or place. Enjoy the benefits of stretching, like stress reduction and prevention of repetitive injuries (e.g., carpal tunnel syndrome) from the convenience of your chair. The **My Daily Yoga** site (www.will-harris.com/yogaindex.html) offers free online demos of easy-to-do yoga - perfect for a 10 minute stretch break anytime, anywhere you have computer access. There's no pain and always plenty to gain from a serious stretch.

Enjoy 10-minute balance activities.

Many yoga moves, as well as Pilates and Tai Chi, also help work the core muscles - in the back, abdomen, and pelvis - that provide the stability for everyday balance. An inexpensive stability ball (AKA Swiss or Swedish therapy ball) is a fun way to add a variety of balance, stretching, and strength activities to your down time. Keep one in front of your TV - and turn couch potato time into a fitness opportunity. Most balls come with a set of simple instructions and tips for safe use.

NEED MORE REASONS TO ADD 10 MINUTES OF ACTIVITY TO YOUR DAY? How about helping brain function, improving memory, and possibly reducing depression and anxiety? In his new book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, psychiatrist John Ratey explains how regular doses of physical activity may benefit your brain as much as your body. Read more about the book, along with tips, news, and additional information on Dr. Ratey's blog at <http://johnratey.typepad.com/>