



30-Minute Workouts for Any Schedule

Who isn't in a time crunch these days? Even with the best intentions, it's easy to fall off the workout wagon after a hiccup in a weekly routine. Yet, the beneficial effects of exercise are undeniable and far outweigh any risk in most adults. Current recommendations suggest that in a week, adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise such as brisk walking or cycling, and two to three days of muscle-strengthening activities.

It's best to spread your activity out during the week, as well as breaking it up into smaller chunks of time throughout the day. In fact, "research continues to emerge supporting the notion that small bouts of exercise accumulated throughout the day may provide many of the same benefits as one continuous bout of activity," says Jessica Matthews, MS, an exercise physiologist at the American Council on Exercise. So, if you can't seem to find 30 consecutive minutes in a day for your workout, you can still fit it in by splitting up the time.

So how do we put those recommendations into practice? "Making time for physical activity starts with changing our mindset and treating workouts just as you would any other important appointment or commitment," says Matthews. "To help make fitness a priority, block off time in your day planner and treat it just as you would any other obligation."

10-Minute Mini-Workouts

Matthews suggests taking 10 minutes in the morning, afternoon and evening to do some form of activity. This can include 10 minutes of bodyweight exercises (push-ups, crunches, lunges, squats, etc.) in the morning, a 10-minute brisk walk during your lunch break at work and 10 minutes of yoga-inspired stretching in the evening.

Involve the Family in Daily Fitness

Thirty minutes will fly by if you get the kids engaged in something that they, too, can enjoy. Grab the family and head out for a walk, game of tag or bike ride.

Clean with Purpose

Don't just sweep the floor, scrub the floor. Don't just unload the dishwasher, dance with the dishes. Minutes add up fast when you move more during your clean-up time.

Look for Opportunities to Walk

Suggest work meetings on the go. "Walk and talk in lieu of sitting in an office," suggests Felicia Stoler, DCN, MS, RD, exercise physiologist. "I do that with clients when the weather is nice versus sitting in my office," she says. If your job has you hanging out in airports on a regular basis, make that work for you, too. "When traveling, I like to walk and check out the stores in the airport — not to buy, but to keep moving before hours of sitting," Stoler says.

Stoler also points out how quickly 30 minutes of activity accumulates when you seek out opportunities, such as taking the stairs, parking far away and doing yard work.

If you can't seem to find the self-motivation needed to make it happen, consider recruiting a workout partner or hiring a fitness professional. Knowing that someone is expecting you at a certain place or time can help to enhance accountability for being more active, says Matthews.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics - Heather Mangieri, MS, RDN, CSSD, LDN;
<http://www.eatright.org/resource/fitness/exercise/workout-ideas>

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