

Exercise module

16-WEEK CURRICULUM

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: EXERCISING WITHOUT A WORKOUT

Most of us realize that physical activity is very important for weight loss and maintenance. But did you know that you can lose fat and preserve muscle mass without “working out?” According to the Surgeon General’s report on physical activity, you can. Increasing the amount of physical activity you do during the day, even slightly, can help you lose weight. Any activity is a step in the right direction. By making small increases in your physical activity, and making time for them in your daily schedule, you can take great strides toward better health.

It All Adds Up

The Surgeon General’s Report recommends that we spend 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity during the day, at least five days a week. You don’t have to devote a lot of time to these daily activities—a few bouts of 10 or 15 minutes over the course of a day can really add up. You do need enough steady activity to get your circulation going and your heart rate elevated, but not so much that you’re left huffing and puffing. Ideally, you should be able to carry on a conversation while moving about.

Organizing Your Day

A little planning goes a long way when it comes to fitting in exercise. A careful inventory of your day will reveal the activities you normally do. A little rearranging can transform mundane chores into moderate activity. For instance, instead of resting between loads of laundry, keep moving. Compress all of your chores into one steady stream of movement. You’ll get done faster and be fitter in the long run.

The Daily Dozen: 12 Activities You Can Do Most Days

You can always sneak fitness into your busy day. Think of a normal day and try to identify at least two opportunities from the list below for getting more exercise. Remember, even doing little things can make a big difference.

1. Vacuuming
2. Washing dishes
3. Dusting
4. Doing laundry
5. Changing beds
6. Mopping floors
7. Walk instead of driving or taking the bus.
8. Ride a bicycle to work.
9. If you drive, park farther away from your destination.
10. Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
11. When you get home with the groceries, carry one bag of groceries at a time into the house.
12. Store groceries in less convenient locations (like a downstairs pantry) so that you need to walk farther to get them.