

Fit Facts™

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE®

MAKING TIME FOR EXERCISE IS EASY

By now you know that exercise is good for you, and that you should do something on a regular basis. What's the best time for you to exercise? Anytime. Honestly. For example, when you're sitting and watching TV, stretch your muscles. Never stretch so hard it hurts. Rather, stretch to the point of mild tension and hold the stretch for 10 to 30 seconds.

A healthy exercise program includes three kinds of exercise: aerobic activity, muscular strengthening and flexibility exercise. You can start your exercise program without investing in any elaborate equipment. For example, you can do simple exercises at home or at your desk at work, including sit-ups, push-ups and pull-ups. For basic body weight exercises, weight-lifting equipment isn't required. Head for the kitchen and pick up the soup cans you have in the cupboard.

AEROBIC ACTIVITY CAN BE FUN

Aerobic activity is defined as prolonged continuous movement of large muscle groups. Translated, that means do something that keeps you moving. Ideally, do it for 20 minutes straight. If you don't have that much time, two 10-minute aerobic activity sessions will benefit you almost as much.

The good thing about aerobic activity is that it includes many of the sports you probably already enjoy. Walking, biking, hiking, dancing, swimming, even basketball are all examples of aerobic exercise.

Another good thing is that you can easily accomplish those two 10-minute sessions with things like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking around

the neighborhood after work or parking your car farther away. You could even turn shopping into an aerobic activity. Shopping is walking, so don't stop for 10 minutes straight and you've worked in one of your daily sessions! Check with your local mall for mall walker programs, and you'll have company.



Aerobic exercise is definitely good for cardiovascular health and fitness. And here's something else you'll like: Aerobic activity can help you lose fat weight.

PLENTY OF GOOD EXERCISE ALL AROUND THE HOUSE

If you do housework or yard work, you're doing yourself a favor. The stretching and lifting housework entails is good exercise. So is work you do outside. Yard work uses many muscle groups, especially activities like planting and working in the garden.

Raking uses your arm and back muscles. Digging gives your arms and legs a workout. And gardening provides a

bonus: You'll have more fresh vegetables and fruits to add to your diet.

IS ONE TIME BETTER THAN ANOTHER TO EXERCISE?

It's really up to you. You can exercise in the morning, afternoon or evening. Lunch breaks offer an excellent opportunity to get out of the office and exercise. Use your coffee break to take a short walk around the office. Get rid of the day's stress by fitting in an exercise session after work.

Whatever time you choose, make sure you stick with it. For some people, it's easier to stay with an exercise program when you do it with a friend or co-worker.

MAKE TIME TO STAY HEALTHY

Exercise is one of the best things you can do for yourself. If you're basically healthy, get going right now. If you're 40+ or have any health problems, consult your physician first.

Your local recreation and fitness centers should have exercise information and instruction. Or call ACE at (800) 529-8227, and we'll help you locate an ACE-certified Aerobics Instructor or Personal Trainer in your area.

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