

... MAY 2011 ...

QUICK TAKES

Stand Up! Live Longer!

A sedentary lifestyle has been identified as a significant risk factor for heart disease, cancer and stroke. The CDC reports that these three chronic diseases account for more than 50 percent of all American deaths each year. Steven Blair, professor of exercise science and epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of South Carolina, calls physical inactivity "the biggest public health problem of the 21st century."

It's true that modern life doesn't require as much physical activity as it did in the past. Many of us sit at work for much of the day, then sit down once we're home to watch TV or surf the Internet or play a video game. Finding the time and opportunity to get up and move can be challenging, but the benefits of regular physical activity are far-reaching. They include:

- Reduced risk of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes.
- Reduced risk of dying from heart disease.
- Healthier bones, muscles and joints.
- Reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression.

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Exercise: How Much Do We Need?

For optimal health benefits, experts recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking. Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily.



Let's explore easy ways to incorporate more physical activity into your home life and leisure time.

Don't Just Sit There!

It's a fact: There are more TV sets in the U.S. than there are people to watch them. Very few of those sets stay turned off for too long, though. According to the A.C. Nielsen Co., the average American watches 3 hours and 46 minutes of television each day. By the age of 65 that same average American will have spent nearly nine years glued to the tube.

Few of us are willing to cut out TV altogether, but it's worthwhile to tally up the number of hours you spend in front of the screen each week. Can you cut it back by 10 percent or 20 percent? And while you're watching TV, don't just sit there. Instead:

- Sit and bounce on a large exercise ball to strengthen your abs and glutes.
- Keep a pair of free weights handy for arm curls.
- Squeeze a tennis ball to strengthen the muscles in your hands and arms.
- Stretch, march in place, do push-ups or jumping jacks during the commercials.
- Practice your quickstep, rumba or cha-cha moves along the your favorite dancing stars.

Nothing worth watching on TV tonight? There are some physically-oriented video games like Nintendo Wii Fit or Dance Dance Revolution that can get you and your family up and moving.

Remember Your Pedometer

Wear a pedometer all day to track your daily steps. Once you get home from the office and change out of your work clothes, don't forget your pedometer on the dresser! Strap it back on to keep track of the steps you take in the house and around the yard. Walk the dog, walk to the library or walk to a nearby park to log even more steps toward your ultimate daily goal of 10,000 steps.

