

Student Health Centre

Physical @ctivity Tips



Tips

Tailor these tips for your own use: people are motivated by all sorts of different things and there is a wealth of ideas here, usefully sorted into areas of life, home and work.

Have fun!



Motiv@te

- Don't put off being active until tomorrow - start today!
- Just start! Every move counts
- Recognise the activity that you are already doing, congratulate yourself and build upon this
- Choose wisely- do activities that you find fun and enjoyable
- Think of activity as an opportunity, not a chore- it's an opportunity to socialise, improve your health and explore your surroundings or the outdoors
- Encourage your child to go for a bike ride and cycle or walk with them
- Physical activity can be done any time, anywhere and by anyone
- Physical activity is free, easy to do and does not need any special equipment
- Try letting something go! Are there low-priority inactivities you can stop doing to make time for your health?
- If your motivation is low think of all the good you can do for yourself with physical activity; health, challenges, well-being, spending extra time with friends or family
- Be an active role model for your friends, colleagues and children
- Motivate a friend to start doing something active or try something new
- Think about other activities you can do if your plans have to be cancelled due to bad weather or other priorities
- Be ready! You can do exercise anytime, have your kit available and visible
- Find a role model, preferably someone who started where you are. Talk to them and be inspired by their success.
- Read books or magazines to inspire and educate yourself- get moving and keep moving
- Listen to other people and pick up tips and ideas of how to be active
- Ask active people how they stay motivated
- Put things into perspective! How often do you sit and do nothing for 30 minutes-be active, improve your health and well-being and achieve your goals
- When you believe that you are going to be more active, you will find a way round any obstacle
- Exercise a little each day rather than doing a lot today and nothing for the rest of the week
- Develop an exercise habit. It takes about 4 weeks to form a habit, so keep at it!
- Think of all the times during your normal day when you can be active
- Do an activity at a time that suits you- morning, lunch-time, evening
- Get active in a place you like: a park, on a river bank, a beach or in the woodlands
- Set yourself small, specific and achievable active goals
- Write down your goals on paper
- Place your goals somewhere you look everyday- on the bathroom or bedroom mirror, the refrigerator- this will motivate and remind you to be active
- Place personal motivational notes or pictures around the house, workplace or in your car
- Motivate yourself to get started or keep going by visualising what you are aiming for.
- Keep a record of your activity, look back, reward yourself and set new goals
- Variety is the spice of life and new routes will keep you motivated- find a variety whether you walk, cycle or jog

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Don't get discouraged if you don't see immediate results

- Write down how good you felt when you were active and have it handy for when you are feeling de-motivated
- If your routine has been broken, recognise why and make contingency plans for the next time
- Setting new goals is a good way to get back into an active routine after a break such as a holiday
- Change your activity pattern if you are battling with boredom: different activities at a different time of the day, or in a different place
- Don't give up if you miss a day of activity you planned: just get back on track the next day
- If you are really de-motivated, have a break and start afresh the next day, a rest may do you good and remind you what you are missing.
- Don't let others lead you astray. Explain why you want to do this and invite them to get involved
- Play your favourite music while you walk etc.
- Join a fitness centre near your home or place of work
- Buy a new piece of equipment to keep you motivated- clothes, shoes, step-o-meter
- Be determined! When all else fails, tune into your willpower or inner-self

Active @ work

- Whenever you can, walk to talk instead of using the phone or e-mail
- Snack throughout the morning at work and use lunch-time for a walk.
- When on the phone, stand, do calf raises or march on the spot
- Choose hotels with fitness centres, swimming pools or areas to walk when you travel on business trips
- Set your computer or a watch alarm to remind you to go for a walk or take a stretch break a few times a day
- Put rubbish in the furthest bin away from your work station
- Take a walking meeting to brain-storm ideas with co-workers
- Keep some comfortable clothes and shoes at work so you can take an active break
- When driving to visit a colleague park at the furthest end of the car park
- Bend, stretch, move, lift, or carry whenever the opportunity arises
- Never use the lift for less than three floors, take the stairs
- Use the furthest bathroom, preferably up or down stairs
- Do some quick stretching at your desk throughout the day
- Set up a lunch time walking group
- Take part in a lunch time activity class- at work or at a local leisure centre
- Form a sports team or health events team with colleagues- raise money for charity events
- Walk or cycle all or part of the way to work
- Plan ahead and schedule your physical activity into the week- write it in your diary. The best time to exercise is when it's most convenient for you!
- Send printing jobs to the printer at the furthest point away from your work station
- Pick some dining spots 10 minutes away to add a walk into lunch
- Take a 5-10 minute activity break 3 times each day, you will be more productive afterwards and be working towards your health too.

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Active @ home

- Play active games with your children- in the garden, in your local area, at your local leisure centrefrisbee, tag, hide and seek
- Walk to collect your take away food
- Count active indoor chores – done briskly - as part of your daily 30 minutes of activity
- Don't delegate all the chores, these are all good to help your fitness: mow the grass, rake leaves, dig the garden or wash the car
- Walk or cycle to your local shop for small items
- Have a day without the TV, video or hi-fi remote!
- Take a dog for a walk; your own, a neighbours or - if all else fails -an imaginary dog
- Get up and walk around the house, climb the stairs or do some stretches during TV adverts
- Practise simple stretches or strengthening moves while watching TV
- Play games at your next family event (BBQ, party)
- Bend, stretch, move, lift, or carry whenever the opportunity arises
- Save electricity and get a good workout: put away your electric mixer and use a spoon instead
- Eat less on a day when you aren't very active - balance your food intake with your activity output
- Weekends are a good time for activity, there's more time to relax and it makes a change from sitting activities in the house
- Work out with an exercise video
- Go for a sociable walk after your evening meal with family or friends
- View all the chores like lawn mowing, dusting, and vacuuming as opportunities to be active
- Read as you cycle- use a stationary bicycle at home or the leisure centre
- Be active while you listen to your favourite music
- Join in to any physical activity routine on TV
- Use the stairs as much as possible. See if you can double or treble the number of flights you climb
- Always be active when talking on the phone; walk around or stretch

Active @ leisure

- Plan active days with friends, family or alone - go for a walk in the countryside, the park, zoo or shopping mall
- Make a regular appointment with a friend to do some physical activity and meet up once a week
- Cycle or walk to meet friends or family
- Make a Saturday morning walk, cycle, swim or activity a family habit
- Walk up and down the sidelines at your child's sports practices or games and get other parents to join in
- Join in an activity that your children already enjoy
- Walk and talk with your partner
- See the sights in new cities by walking, jogging or cycling
- Explore your local area by walking, jogging, cycling or roller blading
- Plan active holidays/ vacations; go swimming, go for a walk on the beach or in the country
- Go dancing with friends instead of sitting and talking

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- Join an active hobby club
- Play golf at the local club
- Coach your child's sports team
- Go roller blading or skating with friends in the park or around your local area
- Encourage your child to go for a bike ride and cycle or walk with them
- Play tennis or badminton with a friend at your local leisure centre

@ctive travel

- Decrease the time you are inactive on long car rides by stopping to do stretches or take a short walk
- Keep moving when waiting for the bus, train, tube or plane
- Stand up, stretch or walk about frequently when on long plane, train or bus journeys
- Be prepared! Keep some comfortable clothes and shoes in the boot of your car ready for a workout anytime
- Create a walking bus with other parents in your neighbourhood, even if only for the summer months
- Get off the bus a few stops early and walk the rest of the way to your destination
- Walk to the next bus stop or tube station along and extend this each week
- Always take the stairs instead of the lift or escalator
- When there are no stairs, walk up the escalator
- Walk or cycle for journeys less than a mile

@ctive shopping

- A daily walk to fetch the newspaper will do more for your health than you realise
- While in a queue, stand with a straight body posture and practice squeezing your stomach muscles in
- If time permits when you go shopping, enter the mall further away from the shop you intend to visit
- Park at the furthest end of the car park
- Walk to the shops, it is great for your health, you will save petrol and not have to bother about parking
- When unloading your shopping take one bag at a time and increase your activity
- Take care to carry shopping bags evenly: spread the weight and don't twist as you lift

Seasonal @ctivity

- On a clear summer's day go for a walk in your local area, in the countryside, along a river bank, or around a park
- In the summer lighter nights provide a perfect opportunity to go for a walk either before or after your evening meal
- The lighter mornings of the summer months provide a perfect opportunity to fit more activity into your daily schedule
- If the snow blocks your drive or pathway you can shovel the snow as part of your daily physical activity
- When the leaves fall in autumn rake them off your garden or pathway as part of your daily physical activity
- Spring clean your house and count the work you do as part of your daily physical activity
- Don't be put off going for a walk by the cold weather- wear layers you can remove as you get warmer
- When the nights are dark get involved in activities that you can do indoors
- If you enjoy being active outside this doesn't need to stop in the winter months plan ahead so that the activity you do fits into daylight hours

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@ctivity Challenges

- Join a friend, once a week, who is already active - on the tennis court, in the pool, walking in the countryside or at the gym
- Plan to do something active each day, it all counts!
- Think of an activity you have always wanted to do and give it a go
- Go for a 10 minute walk before or after meals
- Schedule a walk, cycle or swim either before or after the TV programme you want to watch
- Take part in a charity event to get active, be healthy, socialise and raise money
- Get out of the lift 3 floors before your floor and walk
- Buy a step-o-meter, increase the number of steps you do by 10% each week
- Count how many flights of stairs you climb in a day, increase the number of flights you climb by 3 or more
- At the weekend plan to do at least one activity; on your own or with family or friends
- Once a month take part in a new activity just for fun
- Choose one health benefit a month and adjust your activity behaviour accordingly
- Set a date with a partner or friend to do an activity that you will both enjoy
- At least once a fortnight, wash the car, mow the lawn – or someone else's,
- Invest in a skipping rope and see how long you can skip for
- Only ever carry one thing up or down the stairs at a time, you will have to go back for more but this will make you more active
- When you get in and out of bed do 5 simple stretches or strengthening moves
- When brushing your teeth balance on one foot then the other
- Do 5 simple stretches while waiting for the kettle to boil
- While waiting for your lunch or evening meal to cook go for a walk round the block

@ctive facts!

- Physical Activity can be done by anyone! It is simply any bodily movement produced by the muscles that results in energy expenditure (calories burned)
- You do not have to play sport to be active. There are many moderate intensity activities that are fun and do not require any special skills or equipment
- You do need to put some effort when you start a new activity but it will more than pay you back in health and energy benefits
- Inactivity is just as harmful to health as smoking, heavy drinking or a diet high in fat
- All it takes to benefit your health is 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on five or more days of the week
- Any physical activity is better than no physical activity at all! Accumulating short bouts (5-10 minutes) should make it easy to fit activity into an existing routine
- By 2020, 70% of our disease will be directly caused by our lifestyles: inactivity and high fat diets are bad for our health
- Over 60% of the worlds population is not physically active enough to gain health benefits
- Physical inactivity is a major health risk (WHO 2002) and is one of the top ten leading causes of death and disability in the world
- 37% of CHD deaths are attributable to inactivity compared to only 19% for smoking
- Individuals who are inactive are 1.9 times more likely to have a heart attack than their active contemporaries

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- You are more likely to develop diabetes, obesity or hypertension if you are inactive, all of which increase the risk of heart disease
- Great news if you are inactive! The greatest increase in health benefit comes to inactive people who start to take regular moderate intensity physical activity
- Doing physical activity twice a week that promotes strength and flexibility will make everyday activities easier
- If you are regularly physically active you are less likely to develop health problems than sedentary individuals
- 30 minutes of raking in the garden, vacuuming, washing the car or window cleaning is equivalent to a leisurely row
- 30 minutes of raking the garden, vacuuming, washing the car or window cleaning can burn more energy than playing a leisurely game of volleyball
- 30 minutes of weeding the garden or waxing your car is equivalent to 30 minutes of dancing or walking at 4mph
- Most people see time as the biggest barrier to physical activity but we're only suggesting 30 minutes a day!

For references and further information, see the D Physical Activity Health Statistics and References