# Physical Activity in Your Daily Life

Swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing, aerobic dancing, walking or any of dozens of other activities can help your heart. Whether it's included in a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all physical activity adds up to a healthier heart.

## At Home

It's convenient, comfortable and safe to work out at home. It allows your children to see you being active, which sets a good example for them. You can combine exercise with other activities, such as watching TV.  If you buy exercise equipment, it's a one-time expense and other family members can use it.  It's easy to have short bouts of activity several times a day.

- Do housework yourself instead of hiring someone else to do it.
- Work in the garden or mow the grass.  Using a riding mower doesn't count!  Rake leaves, prune, dig and pick up trash.
- Go out for a short walk before breakfast, after dinner or both!  Start with 5-10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes.
- Walk or bike to the corner store instead of driving.
- When walking, pick up the pace from leisurely to brisk.  Choose a hilly route.  When watching TV, sit up instead of lying on the sofa.  Better yet, spend a few minutes pedaling on your stationary bicycle while watching TV.  Throw away your video remote control.  Instead of asking someone to bring you a drink, get up off the couch and get it yourself.
- Stand up while talking on the telephone.
- Walk the dog.
- Park farther away at the shopping mall and walk the extra distance.  Wear your walking shoes and sneak in an extra lap or two around the mall
- Stretch to reach items in high places and squat or bend to look at items at floor level.
- Keep exercise equipment repaired and use it!

## At the Office

Most of us have sedentary jobs.  Work takes up a significant part of the day.  What can you do to increase your physical activity during the workday?

- Brainstorm project ideas with a co-worker while taking a walk.
- Stand while talking on the telephone.
- Walk down the hall to speak with someone rather than using the telephone.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.  Or get off a few floors early and take the stairs the rest of the way.
- Walk while waiting for the plane at the airport.
- Stay at hotels with fitness centers or swimming pools and use them while on business trips.
- Take along a jump rope in your suitcase when you travel.  Jump and do calisthenics in your hotel room.
- Participate in or start a recreation league at your company.
- Form a sports team to raise money for charity events.
- Join a fitness center or Y near your job.  Work out before or after work to avoid rush-hour traffic, or drop by for a noon workout.
- Schedule exercise time on your business calendar and treat it as any other important appointment.
- Get off the bus a few blocks early and walk the rest of the way to work or home.
- Walk around your building for a break during the workday or during lunch.
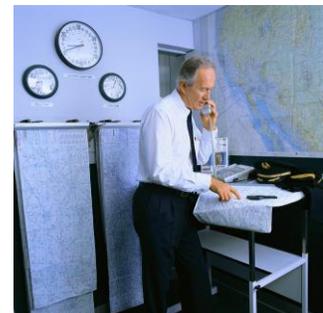
## At Play

Play and recreation are important for good health.  Look for opportunities to be active and have fun at the same time.

- Plan family outings and vacations that include physical activity (hiking, backpacking, swimming, etc.)
- See the sights in new cities by walking, jogging or bicycling.
- Make a date with a friend to enjoy your favorite physical activities.  Do them regularly.
- Play your favorite music while exercising, something that motivates you.
- Dance with someone or by yourself.  Take dancing lessons.  Hit the dance floor on fast numbers instead of slow ones.
- Join a recreational club that emphasizes physical activity.
- At the beach, sit and watch the waves instead of lying flat. Better yet, get up and walk, run or fly a kite.
- When golfing, walk instead of using a cart.
- Play singles tennis or racquetball instead of doubles.
- At a picnic, join in on badminton instead of croquet.
- At the lake, rent a rowboat instead of a canoe.

Source:  American Heart Association

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