



25 Easy Ways to Fit In 10 Minutes of Exercise

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By: Editors of Prevention Magazine

Stolen Moments Add Up

Experts recommend working out 45 minutes to an hour a day (30 minutes for beginners) for weight loss and fitness. But if you're like most women, you don't always have a block of 30 to 60 minutes a day to devote exclusively to doing your workouts.

Lest you think that short bursts of activity have a negligible effect on your fitness program, think again. One study found that women who split their exercise into 10-minute increments were more likely to exercise consistently, and lost more weight after five months, than women who exercised for 20 to 40 minutes at a time.

In a landmark study conducted at the University of Virginia, exercise physiologist Glenn Gaesser, PhD, asked men and women to complete 15 10-minute exercise routines a week. After just 21 days, the volunteers' aerobic fitness was equal to that of people 10 to 15 years younger. Their strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility were equal to those of people up to 20 years their junior. "It would be useful for people to get out of the all-or-nothing mind-set that unless they exercise for 30 minutes, they're wasting their time," says Gaesser.

Breaking exercise into small chunks on your overscheduled days can also keep your confidence up, since skipping it altogether can make you feel tired, guilty, or depressed. Keep in mind, though, that short bursts of exercise are meant to supplement, not replace, your regular fitness routine.

Here are simple, practical ways to work exercise into your day even when you're short on time:

Around the House

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1. When you go outside to pick up your morning newspaper, take a brisk 5-minute power walk up the street in one direction and back in the other.
2. If you're housebound caring for a sick child or grandchild, hop on an exercise bike or do a treadmill workout while your ailing loved one naps.
3. Try 5 to 10 minutes of jumping jacks. (A 150-pound woman can burn 90 calories in one 10-minute session.)
4. Cooking dinner? Do standing push-ups while you wait for a pot to boil. Stand about an arm's length from the kitchen counter, and push your arms against the counter. Push in and out to get toned arms and shoulders.
5. After dinner, go outside and play tag or shoot baskets with your kids and their friends.
6. Just before bed or while you're giving yourself a facial at night, do a few repetitions of some dumbbell exercises, suggests exercise instructor Sheila Cluff, owner and founder of The Oaks at Ojai and The Palms, in Palm Springs, CA, who keeps a set of free weights on a shelf in front of her bathroom sink.

While Waiting

7. Walk around the block several times while you wait for your child to take a music lesson. As your fitness level improves, add 1-minute bursts of jogging to your walks.
8. Walk around medical buildings if you have a long wait for a doctor's appointment. "I always ask the receptionist to give me an idea of how long I have left to wait," Cluff says. "Most are usually very willing to tell you."
9. While your son or daughter plays a soccer game, walk around the field.
10. Turn a trip to a park with your child into a mini-workout for you. Throw a ball back and forth and run for fly balls.

At Work

11. Walk to work if you can. "I walked to work for months, 1 1/2 miles each way," says Mary Dallman, PhD, professor of physiology at the University of California, San Francisco, and she really saw results.
12. If you dine out on your lunch hour, walk to a restaurant on a route that takes you a little bit out of your way.



13. If you have a meeting in another building, leave 5 or 10 minutes early (or take some time afterward), and do some extra walking.
14. On breaks, spend 5 to 10 minutes climbing stairs.
15. If you're pressed for time and must wait for an elevator, strengthen your core with ab exercises. Stand with your feet parallel and your knees relaxed. Contract the muscles around your belly button. Then elevate your upper torso, and release. Finally, contract your buttocks for a few seconds.
16. Use a ringing phone as an excuse to stretch your back. Stand with your feet astride. Imagine that you are encased in a plaster cast from your waist to your head. Gently tilt the lower part of your pelvis backward. Contract your abdominal muscles. Then gently tilt your pelvis forward.

When You're Watching TV

17. Put away your remote and change channels the old-fashioned way—by getting up and walking to the television set.
18. Dance as if you were 16 again. Put on a music program or MTV. Then dance like crazy, advises Peg Jordan, PhD, RN, author of *The Fitness Instinct*. "Free yourself to think of movement as something that you have a right to do," she says.
19. During commercials, jog in place. A 150-pound woman can burn up to 45 calories in 5 minutes. Or try our Couch-Potato Workout.
20. Do leg exercises and lifts with small weights while you watch *The Weather Channel*, cooking shows, movies, or the news.

While Traveling

21. Pack your sneakers and a fitness DVD. Call ahead to make sure your room has a DVD player. If it doesn't, ask to rent one from the hotel.
22. If you're traveling by car, stop twice a day for short, brisk walks and some stretching.
23. During layovers at airports, avoid the mechanized "moving carpets" that transport travelers from concourse to concourse. "If you're in between flights, walk around the concourse as much as you can," suggests Cluff.



- 24.** Book a hotel room between the fifth and eighth floors, then ignore the elevator. Better yet, take two stairs at a time. (Check with the hotel first because for security reasons some hotels do not allow guests to use stairs except for emergencies.)
- 25.** Do calf stretches while riding in elevators.

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