

working out at work...WORKS

Get away from being a couch potato and keep your New Year's resolution to stay in shape! Exercising at work may seem impossible, and the increasing amount of time office workers spend chained to their cubicles and computer workstations isn't helping. The obesity epidemic has ballooned alongside that reality. After work, Americans usually have several chores packed into their schedule, along with taking kids to whatever practice they may have for that day. It's enough to drive anyone insane and make them forget about cramming exercise into their daily routine.

Luckily, that doesn't have to be your reality. Just because you're an office dweller doesn't mean you have to be flabby. All it takes is some creativity and you can find interesting ways to exercise at work. It's all about planning and finding ways to burn calories throughout the work day.

Research shows even 10 minutes of moderate exercise two or three times a day can add up to a big payoff for your mental and cardiovascular health.

Most people know that basic ways of staying active at work such as taking the stairs, parking further away, and walking around the office can help keep the pounds away. Beyond that, consider the following 12 tips:

- Instead of a taking a "working" lunch, take a "walking" lunch through the halls, to a nearby park, or even just around a building.
- Step away from the keyboard. Instead of emailing a message, deliver it in person and don't forget to use the stairs.
- Leave something you'll need later in the day in your car (your lunch, gloves, etc.) so you have to walk outside to get it.
- Use the bathroom on another floor or on the other side of the building.
- Ditch your office chair and replace it with an exercise ball. This will help your posture and make your abs and back stronger.
- Buy a pedometer and try to take 6,000 to 10,000 steps a day.
- If your job involves walking, do it more briskly. You'll burn more calories the faster you walk.
- Go to the mall for lunch and park on the opposite end of the food court. Don't forget to buy something healthy or do laps around the mall.
- Set an alarm to go off every hour to remind you to get your body moving. Even if you just march in place or take a brisk walk, you'll feel more alert.



- Get a headset for your phone so you're free to move around while you work.
- If you have your own office, keep some workout gear at work. Dumbbells, ankle weights, or a resistance band can help you stay trim. Use the equipment while you're on the phone or typing away.
- If you have a company gym, work out during your lunch break or while you work on a project.

Bottom line - move around. Getting your heart rate up for short periods of time is better than doing nothing at all. Ultimately, the workplace workout will help you burn calories, relieve stress, and may even help you smile when you accept more work from your boss.

Planning to start a rigorous new exercise program? Visit your doctor first and get the ok to move forward with your plan.

EMPLOYERS

Fit employees are less likely to get sick or feel under the weather. A person who is in shape is generally more resistant to getting the flu or a cold than a person who is not fit. A healthy workforce will be sick less often and will help you save healthcare dollars.

Retailer L.L. Bean learned that lesson 15 years ago. The company implemented daily mini-exercise breaks throughout its assembly plant with

positive results. The breaks were five minutes each, three times a day. At the end of the shift, the company reported a 30-minute return on productivity for an investment of 15 minutes of physical activity.

EMPLOYER TIPS

- Sign up with a local gym and get a group discount for your employees.
- Hold monthly seminars on healthy eating or exercise tips. Work with local personal trainers and nutritionists to put the seminars together.
- Set up daily or weekly walks in the morning, during lunch, or after work.
- Set an example. If you're active and stay in shape, chances are employees will see you as an inspiration to stay fit, and it will encourage employees to lead a healthy lifestyle.

There are many different ways to promote fitness in the workplace, so get your creative juices flowing. Employees want to do their best and they want to work in an environment where their health is a priority. Remember - they're your most important assets!

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