

4 Fun Ways to Get Fit 10 Minutes at a Time

When asked what prevents them from enjoying the benefits of an active lifestyle, people report that obstacles are: (1) no time to fit fitness into their busy lives; (2) it isn't convenient to exercise; (3) it's boring to exercise; (4) it's hard to stay motivated; and (5) it hurts! If any of these reasons sound familiar to **YOU**, we have some great news from the world of medical research: **You really can get fit 10 minutes at a time.** No matter how busy your daily schedule is, you can probably find 10 minutes here or there – at your desks or around the house. A 10-minute dose of physical activity is not only do-able – it's also easy to stay motivated and hard to get bored in that short a time!

1. Enjoy 10-minute aerobic activities.

One easy way to get 10 minutes of heart-smart aerobic activity is to always have a comfortable pair of shoes nearby, like under your desk or in the car. This way you are ready to walk around the office, the mall, or the neighborhood whenever you have a few extra minutes. Not interested in walking? How about dancing to a few of your favorite tunes? Take 10 to rock around your house while vacuuming or to twirl around with a child (they usually like being "silly" to music!).

2. Enjoy 10-minute strength activities.

If you believe that a gym filled with machines and massive weight lifters is the only way to build muscle strength, think again. To make strength activities convenient, keep a small pair of hand weights (5 to 10 pounds depending on your current ability) near the telephone at work or home. This way you can strengthen your upper body while talking on the phone. A set of resistance bands also makes strength activities convenient at home, at work, or on the road.

3. Enjoy 10-minute stretching activities.

Yoga is another activity that doesn't need a special time or place. Enjoy the benefits of stretching, like stress reduction and prevention of repetitive injuries (e.g., carpal tunnel syndrome) from the convenience of your chair. The **My Daily Yoga** site (www.will-harris.com/yogaindex.html) offers free online demos of easy-to-do yoga – perfect for a 10 minute stretch break anytime, anywhere you have computer access. There's no pain and always plenty to gain from a serious stretch,

4. Enjoy 10-minute balance activities.

Many yoga moves, as well as Pilates and Tai Chi, also help work the core muscles – in the back, abdomen, and pelvis – that provide the stability for everyday balance. An inexpensive stability ball (AKA Swiss or Swedish therapy ball) is a fun way to add a variety of balance, stretching, and strength activities to your down time. Keep one in front of your TV – and turn couch potato time into a fitness opportunity. Most balls come with a set of simple instructions and tips for safe use.

NEED MORE REASONS TO ADD 10 MINUTES OF ACTIVITY TO YOUR DAY? How about helping brain function, improving memory, and possibly reducing depression and anxiety? In his new book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, psychiatrist John Ratey explains how regular doses of physical activity may benefit your brain as much as your body. Read more about the book, along with tips, news, and additional information on Dr. Ratey's blog at <http://johnratey.typepad.com/>.



4 Tasty Ways to Enjoy Balanced Lunchtime Meals

Very few Americans enjoy the luxury of a leisurely lunch these days. We're usually too busy eating at our desk or doing errands to really enjoy our food. Even if you have a hectic schedule, the benefits of a balanced lunch are worth the time and effort. And, according to recent research, **how** you eat may be just as important as **what** you eat. Eating slowly and listening to your internal signals of fullness may help prevent afternoon indigestion – and help you maintain healthy weight at the same time! Here are four simple lunchtime tips to help you choose what to eat, what to drink, and how to enjoy your midday meals more.

1. Eat lean with protein in the center of your plate.

Putting lean protein on your plate helps make a power lunch in several ways. First, lean choices from the meat and beans group give you an important midday dose of protein, iron, and B-vitamins for muscle maintenance and repair. Secondly, lean protein helps with satiety – meaning that you will feel fuller and more satisfied for longer after lunch. It doesn't take a ton of protein to help keep the afternoon munchies away – just 3 to 4 ozs. of fish, skinless poultry, or lean red meat.

2. Eat smart with at least 4 different colors on your plate.

Color is one of the food cues you can use to get the 40+ nutrients that your body needs. Brightly or deeply colored foods tend to be naturally rich in nutrients – red meats offer iron and zinc, while breads with multiple shades of brown and tan have fiber and a variety of B-vitamins. The rainbow colors of fruits and vegetables are a real nutrition bonanza – different colors often indicate different phytonutrients. Make at least one green and one red/yellow/orange choice for every lunch.

3. Drink well with milk or water in your glass.

If your lunchtime drink is usually a super-sized soft drink, it's time to make the switch to milk. A single 12-ounce can of regular soda has about 150 empty calories – large drinks can easily have 300+ liquid calories with zero nutritional value. Milk, especially low-fat and fat-free, is an incredibly nutrient-rich choice – lots of nutrition for relatively few calories. After an 8-ounce glass (or carton) of milk, switch to ice cold plain or sparkling water, maybe with a twist of lemon or lime.

4. Start small, slow down, and savor your food.

In our hectic schedule, lunch is often a super-sized portion of fast food – eaten quickly (maybe in the car) with little time to savor the flavors and little attention to our level of fullness. The more satisfying – and healthier – way to enjoy lunch is to start with a smaller portion (maybe half a sandwich, a cup of soup with a side salad, or shared entrée). Take at least 20 minutes to eat – really paying attention to the quality of the meal and to your internal cues of fullness and satisfaction.

NEED SOME TASTY TIPS FOR ADDING MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO YOUR LUNCHTIME MEALS? Help is just a mouse click away at www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/. Sponsored by the Produce for Better Health Foundation, this site covers just about everything fruit and vegetable: recipes from professional chefs, tips on best ways to shop for and store your produce, and links to a new site just for kids at www.foodchamps.org/.



4 Tasty Ways to Enjoy Better Breakfast Bites

Based on modern science (and the wisdom of mothers through the ages), breakfast is definitely a very important meal. Research shows that breaking your overnight fast with a balanced meal can make a major difference in your overall health and well-being. Eating a smart breakfast can help you improve your attitude, enhance work or school performance, foster a healthy weight, and lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. On the other hand, skipping breakfast is a no-brainer – literally. Skip breakfast and your brain and body suffer all day. Here's how to eat well in the morning and get started on the nutrition fast track to a high-energy, health-smart day.

1. Start with some powerful protein.

The missing link in many morning meals, protein is what you need to go strong and stay focused until lunch. Go lean with protein – a slice or two of Canadian bacon, an egg, some smoked salmon, a slice of deli meat or cheese, a container of yogurt, a scoop of cottage cheese, or leftover meat from the night before. Think outside of the breakfast box – microwave a quesadilla on a whole wheat tortilla with black beans or enjoy a tofu scrambler with chopped veggies and grated cheese.

2. Add in longer-lasting whole grains.

A high-octane carbohydrate will help energize your body and brain for a busy day. Choose whole grains for an extra nutrition punch. They have more fiber and more antioxidants, plus they tend to digest more slowly and provide longer lasting energy. Go inside the cereal box for hot (especially oatmeal and multi-grain) or cold varieties. Whole grain breads, muffins, waffles, pancakes, rolls, tortillas, or even pastas can also help you rise, shine, and rev up your metabolism.

3. Get fresh with fruits (or veggies).

Breakfast is a perfect time to enjoy the produce your body needs for optimal health. Go with fresh fruit – bananas, kiwi, pears, apples, mangoes, melon, oranges, grapefruit, or whatever is in season! Canned (pineapple or mandarin oranges) and frozen (blueberries and strawberries) can be used in yogurt parfaits and mixed fruit salads. Dried fruit is delicious on a bowl of cereal or in a bag of trail mix. How about chopped vegetables in an omelet or a refreshing glass of veggie juice? Looking for more ideas? Check out www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/.

4. Rethink your morning drinks.

Some of us can't seem to get going without that morning cup of coffee – or that triple, extra whipped, tall mocha! While a moderate amount of caffeine is probably fine for most healthy adults (except pregnant women), many Americans are getting lots of extra calories from fancy coffee drinks. Non-fat or 1% milk is a very smart choice – plain or blended into a smoothie, shake, or latte. Concerned about caffeine overload? Switch to decaf, herbal tea, or lower-caffeine green tea.

WHAT ABOUT BREAKFAST BARS? So-called “energy bars” are everywhere and the packages are filled with nutrition promises – to replace meals, boost energy levels, promote weight loss, and pump up your intake of protein, vitamins, and minerals. There's no magic “pep” in these bars. The energy is from calories, just like other foods. Some are no more than “souped-up” candy bars, with lots of fat, saturated fat, and sugar. Choose bars with 10-15 grams of protein and at least 3 grams fiber.

