

## **Don't Believe It: 3 Myths About Exercise**

### **1. Exercise Makes You Tired**

Baloney! Consistent exercise boosts energy levels and helps combat fatigue and stress. Most people report having *more* energy to face their daily routine when they squeeze in frequent workouts, than when they give themselves a “break” and skip workouts entirely.

### **2. The Older You Are the Less Exercise You Need**

Activity levels tend to drop with age, but this is just when exercise may have the most to offer. Increased activity will prolong flexibility, agility, and strength. Even mild cardiovascular activity will raise blood flow and oxygen to the brain, activating a sharper mind!

Studies have shown that moderate exercise combined with *strength training* can stave off common problems associated with aging. Increased muscle mass in turn increases bone density which strengthens bones against osteoporosis. The American Heart Association reports that increased cardiovascular activity helps lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. Stronger muscles and bones also help prevent joint injuries or bone breakage due to accidents or falls.

Additional benefits include resistance to fatigue, release of tension and lessening of anxiety and depression.

Be sure to check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. Many people need specified and personalized routines due to health concerns.

### **3. Exercise Takes Too Much Time**

A few *minutes* a day can increase your rate of physical activity. Even this will raise energy and stamina levels throughout the day. Can you take two 15-minute breaks? Three ten-minute breaks? Simple exercises can be performed quickly and effectively in your own time and your own space. Discuss a specified routine with your personal trainer.

### **Still too much?**

Here are some TIPS to MAXIMIZE your physical ACTIVITY within the demands of your daily responsibilities:

- Use stairs instead of, or in combination with, the elevator. Start with one or two flights and work up as you feel comfortable.

- Park a few blocks from work or the store. The 5-minute walk will clear your head and give you a sense of energy and strength.
- Take an activity break: Get up, stretch, take a short walk, or do stand-in-place calisthenics.
- Reaching for that extra snack? Try a brisk walk instead. Exercise can curb appetite and stave off food until the next meal.
- Take on housework with a vengeance! Charge forward with the vacuum, mop, or dust cloth. Most housework requires a great amount of bending and stretching and when done at a brisk pace, can be enhanced to provide moderate cardiovascular benefits as well. Put on some music, crank it up, have fun!
- Mow your own lawn.
- Choose an active night out. Instead of a heavy dinner and a movie, why not dancing? Or even bowling? Couples and families are always welcome at nighttime YMCA or fitness center activities: Volleyball leagues for various skill levels, swimming classes. Why not visit a local ice rink and try a free-style skate?
- After dinner, instead of heading straight to the living room for two hours of TV before bed, slip in a stroll about the neighborhood. A leisurely walk can aid digestion and prevent the post-dinner-sleepies many people experience.

These small changes in your day can make an impact on your mood, energy, and overall health. It can be easy, quick, and fun!

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## Strength Training Reminders:

### Don't Jerk!

Are you the tortoise or the hare? If you want to win in this race, you'll keep in mind two things – *slow and steady*. Unless you're curious about just how strong your ligaments may or may not be, keep the movement slow, smooth, and controlled. Jerking strains your joints, not your muscles. Be sure to counter resist the release of each movement. And remember, a ligament sprain never helped anyone get in shape!

### Get Bent!

Don't hyper-extend. Remember ligament sprains? At all times, be sure to keep a slight bend in the joints surrounding the muscle group you're working, especially knees and elbows. This keeps all the tension on the muscle, not the joint. It's safer and gives you a more effective workout. You'll feel this one. Trust me.

### Work Opposing Muscles!

Balance is important, not only for looking great and well...balanced (the pear-shape is what we're trying to get rid of, right?) but for the proper strength and posture needed to execute a motion as you advance to heavier weight. Remember those opposing muscle groups? Aggressively working your chest yet neglecting your back will create a muscular imbalance which can effect posture, undermine strength, lead to injury, and overtime *will* be asthetically noticable.

## Breathe!

Simple, right? But this is the one thing more than any other gets forgotten as we concentrated on proper form and assert will-over-weight on those last few reps. Muscles cannot grow without oxygen. A proper breathing technique will enhance your workout - guaranteed. Inhale slowly from your abdomen. Exhale with the resistance, inhale with the release. Improper breathing or holding your breath can lead to increased blood pressure, broken blood vessels, and even hernia! If you think you just “do it automatically”, you’re probably not doing it right, or not doing it consistently. Make it a habit. *Breathe.*