10 Ways to Find Time for Exercise

Busting the #1 Exercise Excuse: Lack of Time

-- By Jennipher Walters, Certified Personal Trainer and Fitness Instructor - SparkPeople.com

What's the No. 1 excuse for not working out? Lack of time. Sure, we're all busy handling multiple priorities and rushing around from here and there every day. However, I promise that no matter how busy you are, someone even busier than you are is working out right now. If you look closer, you'll discover that you *do* have the time to work out—and you deserve to [use that time for yourself](#).

Squeezing in just a few minutes of physical exercise a day has huge benefits on your health, gives you energy and perks up your mood. In fact, a new study published by *The Lancet* found that if inactive people increased their physical activity by just 15 minutes per day, they could reduce their risk of premature death by 14% and increase their life expectancy by three years. Also, remember that "working out" doesn't have to happen in the gym or last for an hour! Short [10-minute bursts of exercise](#), accumulated over the course of the day, can add up to [big fitness and health gains](#), too.

Still not convinced that you have the time to exercise? Here's how to start fitting fitness into your busy life today!

10 Practical Tips to Fit Fitness into Your Busy Life

1. Wake up earlier. Sleep is definitely important for overall health and [weight-loss](#), but could you hit the sheets just 30 minutes earlier, so that you could get up and work out before your day starts? [Working out in the morning](#) has numerous benefits including regulating appetite, boosting energy and—perhaps the biggest benefit of all—an A.M. sweat session ensures that your workout is checked off first thing each day! Because really, how many times have you had the best intentions to exercise in the evening, only to have to work late, help your kids with a project or generally just feel too exhausted to get off the couch? With morning workouts, the time problem is solved!

2. Cut down on media. For just a few days, record how much time you spend surfing the Internet, checking personal email, [watching TV](#) and playing video games whether it's on your computer or your phone. You just might be surprised at how much time you spend on Facebook or playing Angry Birds. Just a few minutes here and there can add up to an hour or more each day. Cut out just some of that screen time and, voila, you suddenly have time to squeeze in at least 10 or 15 minutes of exercise into even the busiest day.

3. Be an active TV watcher. It's unrealistic to never watch TV or to shun the Internet forever (how would you get your [SparkPoints](#) fix?). So when you do, try to incorporate some physical activity. When watching TV, make it a point to do some jumping jacks or push-ups during commercials. Doing a little exercise during the commercial breaks can add up to almost 20 minutes of fitness for every hour of TV you watch. And instead of sitting in a chair when on the computer, try sitting on a stability ball or stack your computer up on some books so that you have a standing desk to surf from. No matter how you do it, try not to sit for more than 20 minutes at a time!

4. Try an active commute. One of the best ways to fit exercise into your life is by incorporating it into your school or work transportation routine. If you live close enough, consider [biking to work](#). If you take the bus, walk to a bus stop that's an extra block or two away, or get off the bus a stop sooner than usual and get a few more steps in. And if you drive to work, park as far away as you can—even a few blocks away, if possible.

5. Make it part of your routine. One reason it's so challenging to fit exercise into a busy schedule is because we're not used to doing it. Heck, it takes time to brush your teeth in the morning, but you do it, don't you? You brush your teeth every day because it's important and because it's almost second nature to get up and do it. Start making some form of exercise—whether it's [walking the dog](#), doing 10 minutes of yoga or going for a bike ride after dinner—a daily tradition, just like showering, brushing your teeth or hitting the coffee shop on the way to work. It's easy to fit in exercise for a few days here or there, but by incorporating it into your *daily* routine like you would your hygiene, you take the process of working out away from willpower and into habit. Need help getting into the habit? Try [SparkGuy's Daily Workout Streak Challenge](#)!

6. Mix socializing with exercising. Do you normally spend time with your family or friends by going to dinner, watching sports on TV or going to movies? Make your social time more active by planning events that get all of you

moving. Go for a family hike on a beautiful Saturday morning, play a game of tag football with your buddies during halftime, or make a [date with your significant other](#) or best friend on the treadmill. There are so many options for squeezing more activity into your social calendar!

7. Turn chores into exercise. While cleaning might not be the most fun activity, it's something we all have to do, and it can definitely be a workout if you want it to be. Set a kitchen timer for 20 minutes and see how much of the house you can clean. Try to be as efficient and quick-paced as possible, and I guarantee you'll work up a sweat. If you're doing lighter housework that is harder to get your heart rate up (like laundry or organizing), throw in some lunges or push-ups every few minutes to start feeling the burn!

8. Schedule an appointment. If you had scheduled a doctor's appointment, you wouldn't miss it would you? How about that important business meeting? Of course not. Working out is actually as important as going to the doctor or any other obligation that you prioritize, because it helps you perform better as a worker, parent, student or volunteer, and keeps you in tip-top shape. So whether it's scheduling in an hour to go to that group exercise class, investing in personal training sessions or even making a date with yourself to do that workout DVD over your lunch break, write it in pen in your calendar and treat it like any other appointment you can't miss!

9. Find an activity you love. Think of your favorite hobby or pastime. Do you have trouble finding time to do it? Most likely, you make time for it because you enjoy it so much. It's the things we don't enjoy that we put off and don't feel bad about missing. That's why it's best to choose a physical activity that you actually enjoy and look forward to. Not only are you more likely to do it, but it also adds more fun into your life. And we all could use some more fun in our busy lives, right?

10. Say no. If you've gone through this entire list of tips and don't think a single one will work in your life, then it's time to look at your priorities and responsibilities. Do you really have to bake cookies for that fundraiser? Babysit for your sister? Take on that extra project at work? Attend that wedding shower of your second cousin? Remember that there's nothing wrong in saying no. Yes, we all have obligations to others, but don't forget about [the obligation you have to yourself](#) to take care of your body and your health!

Remember, exercise gives you energy and keeps you healthy to keep going in that busy life of yours! So don't think of exercise as another to-do to squeeze in on your already busy schedule. Instead, think of it as maintenance for your health and a way to de-stress and do something for *you!*

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