

Move your body

Daily exercise is vital to both your physical health and mental wellbeing. The human body was not designed to spend 40, 50 or more hours a week sitting behind a desk, yet that is exactly how most of us spend our lives.

Regular exercise will help you to manage your weight, prevent a range of serious health issues such as insomnia, anxiety, depression, hypertension, heart palpitations, loss of libido, aches and pains, exhaustion, cognitive difficulties, anger, and depression. In fact not moving your body long term can lead to the development of almost any disease. Exercising will also provide mental and emotional health benefits, including improved self-esteem, psychological wellbeing and elevated moods all of which help us to perform at our best and cope in life.

One of the challenges with 'doing' exercise is finding the time for it. When we are busy and tired it tends to be one of the first things that we drop from our daily schedules. In Chinese medicine it is said that "*to get energy you need to use energy.*" So at the end of the day if you have not moved your body one of the best things you can do is get out and move your body.

In research we conducted in conjunction with GU Health we found out that 76 percent of people said had great intentions and said that they would exercise daily but in reality only 22 percent really did. The number one excuse by 71 percent of people was "they did not have not enough time to exercise."

If you are part of that 71 percent what's the best way to bring regular exercise into your daily life? Probably the most important thing, and the key to consistency and success, is to find something that you like doing so that exercising is something that you look forward to. Recruiting an exercise buddy is a great idea too; you can support and encourage each other in your exercise goals.

The ideal foundation for any exercise program is a combination of cardio and resistance training (lifting weights). Why cardio and weights? Increasing your muscle mass is not about building huge muscles. It's about being toned, fit and strong. And the more you increase the percentage of muscle in your body, the more you decrease the percentage of fat. From my experience pretty much everyone wants less fat and to do this you need to increase muscle. Muscle requires more fuel than fat – which means the more lean muscle you have, the more kilojoules you burn just going about your daily business. Eventually, you'll get to the stage where you don't have to do anywhere near as much exercise to maintain your weight and muscle.

A recent study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology showed that when it comes to burning fat, weight training couldn't be beaten. In the study, thirty active men were randomly placed into one of three groups. The first group ran or jogged, the second group worked out with weights and the third combined both in a cross training program. Fitness analyses taken after the groups had been exercising three days per week for ten weeks showed that the men who lifted weights increased their base metabolic rate by more than 6 percent, while cross trainers increased their metabolic rate by 4.6 percent and the group that ran or jogged didn't experience any improvements in metabolic rate at all.

So how do you fit exercise time in? I recommend alternating cardio and weight training over six days and having a complete rest day once a week. Remember that effective exercise is about good quality, and secondly, no matter what your current level of fitness, you can set your own pace and build up to higher levels of intensity when you feel ready. Having a rest day and alternating your sessions between cardio and weights is important because it is during your rest time that your body regenerates itself.

If you have been a little too human lately and have been off track, don't do what most people do and give yourself a hard time about it or guilt trip yourself. Just do something today to move your body, the momentum will build and you will be back in the groove. It's that simple.

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