

How to Exercise

From Paige Waehner,

Fitting exercise into your schedule

Life, unfortunately, doesn't come with instructions. There's no book to explain how to make it from birth to death and everything that falls in between. One of the hardest things you have to deal with every single day is *exercise*.

You may equate exercise with sweat, pain and tight clothes that announce every unsightly bulge. Maybe you plan on exercising every day but, somehow, never actually get to it. The truth is, exercise doesn't have to hurt and it doesn't have to occur in a health club. Exercise can happen anywhere: at work when you're walking up and down the stairs or at home while you're walking the dog, cutting the grass or vigorously cleaning out your garage. Once you understand that there are ways to incorporate exercise into your life without even once pulling on anything made of Spandex, you're on your way to a healthier life.

The Basics

First, you should understand the components of fitness before you get started.

The following should be included in any fitness routine:

1. **Cardio Endurance** - How well your heart and lungs work to supply your body with oxygen during your workout.

Example: How well you're breathing after chasing your terrified dog around the yard before stuffing him into the tub for a bath.

2. **Muscular Endurance** - How long you can hold a position or repeat a movement.

Example: Carrying 8 bags of groceries, plus a tired child, up 3 flights of stairs and into the kitchen without dropping them.

3. **Muscular Strength** - Your ability to lift the heaviest weight you can, one time.

Example: The strength required to shove your spouse over in an attempt to stifle the chainsaw-like snoring.

4. **Flexibility** - How limber you are.

Example: Your ability to reach the top shelf of your bookcase for a quick dust.

5. **Body Composition** - the proportion of fat compared to bone and muscle. Example: Having a healthy percentage of muscle and fat in your body.

This all adds up to the fact that you should be doing cardio exercise, resistance training, stretching and eating a healthy diet. Oh, you already knew that? Then you're ready to get started.

Now you have to figure out how to fit each of those components into your life.

1. **Cardio**. The general rule is to get at least 20 minutes of cardio exercise three times a week. This can be **any activity that elevates your heart rate** into your training zone. First, figure out your THR (target heart rate) and then choose activities that will get you in that zone. This can include anything from walking the dog to weeding the garden. If you're interested in calorie expenditure, visit the calorie calculator to find out how many calories you're burning.

2. **Resistance Training.** Lifting weights increases your muscle mass which, in turn, helps to raise your metabolism so you burn more calories every day.

It also helps build bone density. You don't need a bodybuilding routine; just a simple total body workout twice a week will do. For detailed information about resistance training, check out Weight Training 101 or visit my Workout Center for workout ideas.

3. **Stretching.** Now, you're walking, you're lifting and you're feeling great. Don't forget to stretch! Flexibility is important because it helps prevent injury. Not only that, stretching helps you relax, increases your coordination, and, best of all, it feels really good. Check out my Flexibility Workout or visit Stretch.com for illustrations for stretches you can do both before and after your workout.

Tips and Tricks

1. Keeping track of your workouts can help you be more consistent.
2. Find a workout buddy to keep you motivated or exercise with your family members.
3. Get professional advice from a personal trainer or nutritionist. Starting out on the right foot can make exercise more effective and more fun.
4. Be active. It doesn't have to be in a health club or an aerobics class and you don't have to wear special clothes or perform complicated activities. It is as simple as making a choice. Will you park right next to the door at work today or will you walk a few extra feet? Will you take a walk after work or sit down and have a drink? Will you wash the car on Saturday or sleep in? Every day you have the option of being more active.
5. Focus on the good things. The more you get your body moving, the more energy you'll have to fulfill your daily obligations. Exercise also helps you sleep better, and it keeps you alert all day long so it's much easier to impress your boss with how smart you are.
6. Be consistent. Stick with it and you'll see results.
7. Reward yourself with a massage, a weekend vacation or new workout gear/clothes.

Daily Exercise Checklist

- Get up 10 minutes early for a walk.
- Park your car at the end of the parking lot.
- Get up every hour for a five minute walk.
- Take the stairs one time during the day.
- Make your dog happy: take him for a long walk.

For more information on this topic contact **Penrith's 'Favourite Personal Trainers'** on the details below.

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