

Be Well Aware – Health Article



Finding Your “Fit” in a Busy Schedule

What is fitness?

Throughout our busy days, there are many things that can claim our time. It can often be hard to find time for fitness. So what is fitness? The definition of fitness is “the ability to survive and reproduce”. Physical fitness is defined as “good health and strength achieved through exercise.” Neither of these are very specific and so fitness can be different for every single person.

Finding your fit may need to start with discovering what fitness is for you. Does that mean you can run a marathon? Squat 500 pounds? Play with your kids or grandkids? Maybe tie your shoes and stand up without losing your breath?

Once you know what your goal for fitness is you can plan and strategize how to fit it into your schedule.

Tips for finding your fit

- Break it down into shorter increments. Research shows that exercising for 10-minutes, 3 times a day is just as effective as exercising for 30-minutes all at once. So go for a few short walks instead of one long one!

- Schedule your workouts. Even if you don’t workout at work, officially setting aside the time can help you stay accountable to yourself.
- Park your car in the back of the parking lot instead of the front to get some more steps. Take the stairs, ride your bike or walk to get places.
- Watching TV? Stand up, dance, lift weights or use resistance bands, ride a stationary bike or hop on a treadmill. Turn the football game into a game for you: field goal = stand for 3 minutes, touchdown = jog in place until the kickoff, turnover = 10 pushups!



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Want to get fit while socializing? Take a fitness class, go dancing, join a walking or sports club, play games with your kids or workout with a friend. This not only makes exercising more enjoyable but is also great at keeping you accountable!

Getting fit at work? Hold stand-up meetings instead of sit-downs, swap your chair for a stability ball, get up and walk for 2 minutes every hour, go to the copy machine on the other end of the floor.

The science of it all

Being active has a lot of benefits! But what if you can't be active for a long time? Can you still achieve higher energy levels, better concentration, lose weight, get stronger and have a healthier heart? Absolutely!

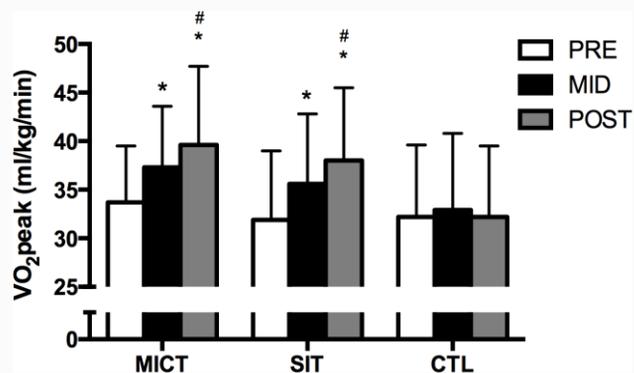
Training at high intensities for short periods has become a leading form of exercise. You might know it as HIIT (high-intensity interval training, AKA HIT), SIT (sprint interval training) or HIIIE (high-intensity interval exercise). They all mean the same thing; work as hard as you can for a little bit and then recover before doing it again.

This type of exercise can be done with cardio-based exercises like running or cycling, or it can be done as "body weight HIIT" which incorporates resistance exercises and calisthenics. All signs point to both methods being highly beneficial!

The graph shown to the right indicates how both moderate-intensity cardio training (MICT) and sprint interval training (SIT) greatly improved the cardiovascular fitness of participants in a 12-week program. The MICT group cycled for 45 minutes at one level of intensity while the SIT group exercised

for 5 minutes doing 3 sets of a 20-second all-out cycle sprint followed by 2 minutes of light cycling to recover.

The same study also looked at muscle activity and found that the SIT group had an increase of 48% compared to 27% in the MICT group. This could mean that training at very high intensities for short periods of time can be just as effective as long bouts of moderate-intensity for both cardio and strength improvements.



What does it all mean?

Getting fit doesn't need a wide-open schedule requiring you to spend hours at the gym every week. Improvements to your fitness level can be accomplished in as little as 10 minutes a day! And that is just how short the research shows, it could be 5 minutes or even 2! So take just a few minutes throughout the day and move as much as you can whether it is standing for a meeting, taking a walk around the floor, or performing a few high-intensity exercises!

References:

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