

... MAY 2011 ...

QUICK TAKES

Stand Up! Live Longer!

A sedentary lifestyle has been identified as a significant risk factor for heart disease, cancer and stroke. The CDC reports that these three chronic diseases account for more than 50 percent of all American deaths each year. Steven Blair, professor of exercise science and epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of South Carolina, calls physical inactivity "the biggest public health problem of the 21st century."

It's true that modern life doesn't require as much physical activity as it did in the past. Many of us sit at work for much of the day, then sit down once we're home to watch TV or surf the Internet or play a video game. Finding the time and opportunity to get up and move can be challenging, but the benefits of regular physical activity are far-reaching. They include:

- Reduced risk of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes.
- Reduced risk of dying from heart disease.
- Healthier bones, muscles and joints.
- Reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Exercise: How Much Do We Need?

For optimal health benefits, experts recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking. Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily.



Let's explore easy ways to incorporate more physical activity into your home life and leisure time.

Don't Just Sit There!

It's a fact: There are more TV sets in the U.S. than there are people to watch them. Very few of those sets stay turned off for too long, though. According to the A.C. Nielsen Co., the average American watches 3 hours and 46 minutes of television each day. By the age of 65 that same average American will have spent nearly nine years glued to the tube.

Few of us are willing to cut out TV altogether, but it's worthwhile to tally up the number of hours you spend in front of the screen each week. Can you cut it back by 10 percent or 20 percent? And while you're watching TV, don't just sit there. Instead:

- Sit and bounce on a large exercise ball to strengthen your abs and glutes.
- Keep a pair of free weights handy for arm curls.
- Squeeze a tennis ball to strengthen the muscles in your hands and arms.
- Stretch, march in place, do push-ups or jumping jacks during the commercials.
- Practice your quickstep, rumba or cha-cha moves along the your favorite dancing stars.

Nothing worth watching on TV tonight? There are some physically-oriented video games like Nintendo Wii Fit or Dance Dance Revolution that can get you and your family up and moving.

Remember Your Pedometer

Wear a pedometer all day to track your daily steps. Once you get home from the office and change out of your work clothes, don't forget your pedometer on the dresser! Strap it back on to keep track of the steps you take in the house and around the yard. Walk the dog, walk to the library or walk to a nearby park to log even more steps toward your ultimate daily goal of 10,000 steps.



Become a 'Food Active-ist'

Do you have the pizza delivery number on your speed dial? Do you sometimes stop at a fast-food drive-thru on your ride home? Is your freezer filled with your favorite microwavable cheesy burritos?

These days, it's much too easy to consume lots of calories while expending very few calories. Try to balance the equation by making physical activity a part of food preparation and consumption. Here are a few suggestions for how to make this happen:

- It's not too late in the season to plant some salad greens and herbs in a small garden bed or patio container. Working the soil is great exercise.
- Save gas and walk or bike to your local grocery store. Better yet, explore a nearby farmers market on a sunny Saturday morning. It's a great way to get outdoors.
- Pack up the family and head out to a local u-pick berry farm. Enjoy a picnic afterward.
- Cook from scratch. Standing while peeling, chopping, slicing and cleaning up all count as physical activity. Teach your kids how to cook, too.
- When eating out, choose a restaurant within walking distance. Burn calories getting there and getting back.

Prevent "nature-deficit disorder"

Children age 8 to 18 spend more time on electronic media indoors than ever before – 7 1/2 hours per day according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. The resulting lack of physical activity and disconnect with the natural environment have been linked to a host of maladies, from excess weight to vitamin D deficiency to high blood pressure. The remedy is pretty simple – children and people of all ages need to get outside and enjoy some healthy, active outdoor fun. The American Recreation Coalition has once again named this coming June as "Great Outdoors Month", an umbrella effort linking dozens of special days and activities including National Get Outdoors Day on June 11. Visit www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org.

If your community doesn't offer enough opportunities or spaces for people to get active, get involved in creating them. Join a local organization to establish green public spaces like parks, community gardens, hiking trails and bike paths.

Berry-Lemon Parfaits

If you can't find fat-free Greek yogurt at your supermarket, use fat-free plain yogurt and drain it for 15 minutes in a paper-towel-lined strainer before using.

Ingredients

2 cups (16 oz) fat-free Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon fresh grated lemon zest
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons sugar
2 pints (about 16 oz) fresh-picked raspberries, blueberries and/or small strawberries, rinsed and lightly patted dry

Preparation

1. In a bowl, blend yogurt, lemon zest, lemon juice and sugar.
2. Spoon yogurt mixture alternating with berries into four tall parfait glasses. Chill about 15 minutes before serving.



Nutritional info per serving

158 Calories
0g Fat
0g Saturated fat
6g Protein
37g Carbohydrate
8g Fiber
68mg Sodium
196mg Calcium

Source: Alere Kitchens