

Let’s Move!

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It is no secret that activity levels decrease with age. Life gets in the way, we don’t recover the way we used to, our schedules are overwhelming, etc. According to Stats Canada, only about 15 per cent of adults are meeting the requirement of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week. The idea here is to spread out those 150 minutes over the week rather than doing it all in one day and being sedentary the rest of the week. Ideally, we should have some thoughtful movement seven days a week.

Think about a typical day, how much time do you spend sitting? Why is it important to get moving? There are many benefits to exercise and movement including increased bone density, reduced risk of diseases associated with aging, increased strength, coordination and balance, decreased risk of Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease, and decreased risk of anxiety and depression. The list of benefits is long and diverse. So how do we fit some planned movement into our day? There are many ways to reap these benefits without stepping foot into a big box gym. The best way to start your “movement” is to get up out of your chair. The American Heart Association has some great ideas of how to get moving at work and in your everyday life:



- *Brainstorm project ideas with a coworker while taking a walk.*
- *Create an exercise accountability partnership.*
- *Stand while talking on the telephone.*
- *Walk down the hall to speak with someone rather than using the telephone or sending an email.*
- *Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Or get off a few floors early and take the stairs the rest of the way.*
- *Participate in or start an adult recreation league at your school.*
- *Schedule exercise time on your business calendar and treat it as any other important appointment.*
- *Get off the bus a few blocks early and walk the rest of the way to work or home.*
- *Walk around your building for a break during the work day or during lunch.*
- *Plan family outings and vacations that include physical activity (hiking, backpacking, swimming, etc.)*
- *Play your favourite music while exercising; enjoy something that motivates you.*
- *Go out for a short walk before breakfast, after dinner or both! Start with five to ten minutes and work up to 30 minutes.*
- *When walking, pick up the pace from leisurely to brisk. Choose a hilly route.*
- *When watching TV, sit up instead of lying on the sofa, or stretch. Better yet, spend a few minutes pedaling on a stationary bicycle while watching TV.*
- *Throw away your remote control. Instead of asking someone to bring you a drink, get up off the couch and get it yourself.*

As a teacher, you have the ability to instill some amazing values in your students. Why not share the importance of physical activity with them? Maybe have the students perform 30 jumping jacks to help re-focus them. Organize a group walk at lunch once a week. Assign physical activity as homework. Play with the kids at recess or after school. As the teacher, stand as much as you can—maybe get a standing desk for times when you need a computer.

The main goal is to just get moving and there is no perfect way to do it—find what works best for you. The key is being consistent so make your goals attainable and be realistic. Bringing movement into the workplace not only benefits you, it benefits those around you like your co-workers and students. Same goes for participating in activity as a family, everybody wins. What are your activity goals for this week? This month? This year? Keep it simple, just move!

Here are some great resources to check out:

http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CanadianPhysicalActivityGuidelinesStatements_E.pdf

http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/pdf/PA_Intensity_table_2_1.pdf

<http://zenhabits.net/the-ultimate-guide-to-motivation-how-to-achieve-any-goal/>

REFERENCES:

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/PhysicalActivity/Exercise-Tips-for-Older-Americans_UCM_308039_Article.jsp

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/PhysicalActivity/GettingActive/Get-Moving-Easy-Tips-to-Get-Active_UCM_307978_Article.jsp

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2011001/article/11396-eng.htm>

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