Take Care of Yourself: Get Exercise

Exercise is often the first thing to go when schedules get busy or during difficult times, but it has many benefits you don't want to miss out on. People who exercise even moderately have much lower rates of heart disease and other medical problems, and regular exercise helps to reduce stress. Experts recommend that adults get a minimum of 150 minutes of exercise that makes you breathe harder per week.

Here are some easy ways to build exercise into your life:

Take a short walk during breaks at work. Walking just 15 minutes a day can make a big difference in how you feel. If you have trouble breaking away from work, pair up with a co-worker to make sure neither of you misses a planned walk. Parking at the opposite end of the supermarket parking lot when you have time—combined with pushing the full cart—will help improve both strength and endurance.

Get exercise while you're watching television. Buy a set of hand weights and exercise or do sit-ups while you're watching TV. Get up during breaks to put in loads of laundry or take out the garbage. You'll maximize efficiency by exercising and getting your chores done at the same time.

Turn family time into exercise time. Spend family time together exploring a local park, going for a bike ride, or just walking around the block. If you go to visit a friend who lives within a mile or two, walk instead of driving. Walk to a nearby store when you just need a few items and use a backpack to carry the groceries home.

Stretch for just a minute or two when you wake up each day. In addition to helping you ease into your day, a brief stretching routine can restore or build flexibility and energize your body.

Plan. Exercise is more likely to happen if you plan it ahead into your day and week. Think about ''when'' you are going to exercise, and not ''if,'' then build it into your weekly schedule.

Monica Tomalka – Health Coach
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