

Exploring Physical Activity Myths

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We all know that physical activity is good for you, but it is easy to drag your feet—literally. We all have reasons to stay inactive, but sometimes those reasons are based more on myth than reality. Here are common myths about physical activity and how to replace them with a positive, can-do attitude.



Myth 1: “I don’t have enough time to be physically active.” Physical activity does take time, but there are ways to make it doable. If you do not have 30 minutes in your daily schedule for an activity break, try to find three 10-minute periods. While on your lunch break, walk with a coworker around the building for 10 to 15 minutes. This is a fantastic way to hold a short meeting or have social time. Need more family time? Spend time together being active by taking a walk, playing games, or going for a bike ride. Get the whole family involved in household chores like cleaning, vacuuming, and yard work.

Myth 2: “The older you are the less physical activity you need.” Most people become less physically active as they age, but keeping fit is important throughout life – especially as you get older. Regular physical activity increases older adult’s ability to perform routine daily tasks and to stay independent longer. Lack of physical activity can lead to more visits to the doctor, more hospitalizations, and more use of medicines for a variety of illnesses. It is never too late to start but you should check with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise program.

Sources:

1. Your Guide to Physical Activity and Your Heart, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/phy_active.pdf
2. Myths about Physical Activity, World Health Organization

Myth 3: “Being physically active is too expensive. It takes equipment, special shoes and I must pay for a gym membership.” Physical activity can be done anywhere and does not necessarily require equipment, except a comfortable pair of walking shoes. Walking is the most practiced physical activity, and it is free, requiring only that you dress appropriately for the weather. Many communities have parks, walking trails or other pedestrian areas that are ideal for walking, running, or playing.

Myth 4: “Physical activity makes you tired.” Although you may feel tired during a workout session, you usually feel more energized afterwards. Doing any regular physical activity can raise your overall energy levels and make you better able to manage everything you must undertake during the day. Regular exercise can also improve your sleep and help manage your stress.

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”
— Albert Einstein

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