WAYS TO GET IN MORE MOVEMENT

Statistics tell us that the majority of Americans are not getting in enough physical activity in their daily lives. I don't think we need statistics to tell us what we can look around and see. We have higher rates of disease and obesity than we've ever had in history. Yet there are more gyms and exercise equipment and videos than we've ever had in history. What is that all about?!

Well, besides the fact that much of that purchased equipment and those DVDs and gym memberships wind up going unused… Most of the problem lies in the fact that we don't get enough movement in our day. Even if we are doing 30 minutes to 60 minutes per day of "exercise", (most of us aren't) we sit the remainder of the day. We simply are not moving our bodies the way humans have for the majority of history. We used to walk a lot and farm and hunt and do physical labor and play more and ride horses and just generally be more active.

Being inactive is not only about the fact that many of us are overweight, but being sedentary also has a negative impact on our health. Lack of using our bodies in an active manner contributes to diabetes, heart disease, stroke, poor circulation, cancer, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, joint problems, depression, anxiety, fatigue, premature death, and muscle wasting. *And contribute to us landing in nursing homes, rather than being able to care for ourselves. Those who are more active in their day to day lives report having a higher quality of life, better relationships, enhanced mental well-being, and the ability to stay more physically functioning later in life. Physical activity is as important to our health as not smoking or not driving 150 mph on a crowded interstate.

Without making this a lecture about what we are doing wrong, let's look at ways that we can fit in more **movement** into our day. Standardized and/or formal exercise is great, but just moving our bodies more is enough to contribute to physical fitness, health, mental well-being, energy, and fat loss.

*By the way, if you spend any time at all in front of the television, computer (for leisure), or on your smartphone playing games, using Facebook, etc, you have time to fit in some physical activity. You can move while doing those things or instead of doing those things.

*Never sit for more than an hour without getting up and moving. Set a timer to remind you when an hour has passed.

Some of these ideas are obvious and some are tried and true that you've heard before, but they all work and they all add up over the course of a day.

1. Stand instead of sit. Standing recruits more muscles, including your core muscles.
2. When standing for long periods, shift your weight from side to side, shuffle your feet back and forth, twist, stretch, bounce up and down, etc.
3. Always take the stairs.
4. Walk instead of ride/drive.
5. Walk while talking on the phone.
6. Build an inexpensive treadmill desk to work at when on the computer. Google for ideas. It can be as simple as a shelf/board across the treadmill handles. Even at 1 or 2 mph, you are moving rather than sitting.
7. Park as far as you can from where you need to be and walk.
8. Always carry your groceries rather than pushing them out in a cart (you can carry more if you are using reusable bags that you can throw on your shoulders/arms).
9. Pace around the house while waiting on dinner to cook.
10. Walk the dog(s). If you don't have one, volunteer as a walker at a shelter or walk someone eles's dog. Dogs usually are always up for it and they need the activity as much as we do.
11. Jumping jacks. Even bursts of 5 or 10 throughout the day count.
12. Cleaning the house.
13. Gardening and raking and various yard work.
14. Push mow rather than ride mow.
15. Pull weeds by hand rather than use toxic chemicals.
16. Pushups. Even 5 a day is better than none a day. If you aren't yet able to get on the floor, do them against a wall or a counter.
17. Air squats. Do bursts of these throughout the day. You can rack up several in minutes.
18. Sit up and down on a chair repeatedly (like air squats).
19. Dance to your favorite music for a few minutes in the morning and any other time you can fit it in during the day. This doesn't have to be formal. Even if you are a dancing dork, you'll enjoy it as long as no one is watching and you'll get the benefits.
20. Jog in place.
21. Air jump rope.
22. Sweep your walkways and driveway rather than using eardrum damaging blowers.
23. Any time you are sitting, actively squeeze and release all the muscles in your body.
24. When you are sitting, lift your legs up and pump them a few times.
25. When you sit, do a reverse plank with hands on your chair.
26. Stretch anytime and anywhere and throughout the day.
27. Walk to a co-worker's office instead of calling them or e-mailing them.
28. Have walk and talk meetings with others as much as possible.
29. If you typically eat lunch at your desk anyways, then be physically active during your lunch break then eat your food after you go back to work.
30. Never use a drive thru at the bank or dry cleaners, always get out of the car and go inside.
    *** *This is just a small sample of ways you can start getting more movement into your day. There are hundreds more ways. Be creative, come up with your own ideas.*