

5 Clever Ways to Find Time to Exercise

I've written before about my discipline of exercise. Honestly, it has to be one of the keys to me being effective in life and leadership. I can tell the difference in productivity when I exercise and when I don't.

I talk to busy, stressed pastors every week and frequently I ask them how they are staying physically fit. Most have been trained and are more disciplined in their spiritual life, but the reality is their physical life is impacting their health ... and ... if its not now, it will someday impact every other part of their life.

As much as it depends on me, I think it is important to take care of our health. But, I'll admit, working 50 or even 70 hour weeks at times makes it difficult to fit exercise into a packed schedule.

I'm purposeful enough though that I'll find a way.

Here are 5 clever ways I find time to exercise:

Work on the elliptical. A few times a week I go over my notes for Sunday. Why not do it while I exercise? I sometimes write blog posts while dancing, I mean moving, on the elliptical. (Posts like this one.) It takes practice to balance, but now it's a great way for me to kill two birds with one stone. What do you have to do that is a routine for you, but you could do while exercising? Anything? Be creative.

Exercise on lunch break. One problem for me is eating three full meals a day. I can't do it these days and maintain my weight. Sometimes my schedule dictates three meals, because many of my meetings are done at these times. I'm bad at resisting food when I have it in front of me. On days I can, I

try to grab something light, fast and healthy and hit the road or gym.

Walk to talk. Weather permitting, my wife Cheryl and I take walks together almost daily. It allows us to catch up on the day, debrief the week ahead and enjoy exercising together. I've done this with staff members too. If you have an extended talk ... walk.

Mental breaks. If I'm stuck in my thoughts, I can almost always spur myself if I exercise. The break in schedule always pays back dividends beyond the apparent loss of time. This is especially true during the most stressful weeks. (By the way, this means I'm always ready with clothes at the office or in my car.)

Prayer time is a sweating opportunity. I can pray when I run. Some can and some can't. But if you can, why not?

Again, I realize the value of exercise for my life ... for the quality of my life ... and so I'll make time for it. You can find time if you are creative and disciplined with your time.

(By the way. This principle works for anything you value. Prayer. Bible reading. Relationships. We find time for that which we value most.)

Have you found any clever ways to work exercise into your schedule? I'm open to learning new ones.

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