

How to Treat Your Body as God's Temple—Even When You're Super Busy

Most of us know it's not good for our health to sit all day, but many jobs involve hours of sitting. Many of us work long hours then have family and home responsibilities once we leave work.

Is there a way to be productive at work and home while still getting the physical exercise we need each day?

Many experts recommend getting in exercise in the morning so that you benefit from an elevated metabolism as you start your day, as well as improved sleep at night. Completing a workout before the commitments of the day begin can ensure that other activities do not distract you from your workout.

However, morning workouts can be easier said than done. Many of us don't get enough sleep as it is, so to wake up extra early to work out doesn't always happen. And exercising after work isn't easy for many people either, what with family and home responsibilities. So how can you fit exercise into your busy day?

Try Thinking Outside the Box

Consider incorporating exercise into your commute. Do you work close enough to walk or bike into work? If not, consider getting off at a farther bus stop or park a few blocks away and walk or bike from there. Discipline yourself to take the stairs or walk the long way to your desk each day.

If exercising before work doesn't seem to fit your schedule, determine when the best time is and try to stick to a routine.

According to WebMD:

“‘Regular exercise is clearly linked to improved health,’ says Dr. Peter Snell, an exercise physiologist and assistant professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. ‘Still,’ Snell adds, ‘about 60 percent of adults do not exercise, and only 25 percent get the recommended amount. Exercise recommendations range from 30 to 60 minutes a day—on most, if not all, days of the week. Forty percent of adults who don’t exercise say they don’t have enough time.

“The availability of facilities to exercise at the work site removes many of the barriers to exercise,’ says Snell. ‘These include:

- Finding time
- Being self-conscious at public health clubs
- Safety
- Convenience
- Social atmosphere
- Weather conditions
- Expense

“‘Having a place to exercise during lunch can be a real bonus, especially for women with children who may find it difficult to exercise before or after work,’ says Snell.”

Dedicating work time to physical activity can lead to higher productivity, according to a study conducted by Ulrica von Thiele Schwarz, Ph.D. and Henna Hasson, PhD published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. This study claims that the same production levels could be achieved in fewer hours leading to greater productivity and better health as a result of regular physical activity.

Harvard Business Review (HBR) explains how physical exercise makes us more productive at work: “Exercise enables us to soak in more information, work more efficiently, and be more productive.” There are cognitive benefits that impact our

performance including:

- Improved concentration
- Sharper memory
- Faster learning
- Prolonged mental stamina
- Enhanced creativity
- Lower stress

In addition, HBR shares the Leeds Metropolitan University study which showed that on days employees exercised during their work day they reported better time management, greater productivity, smoother interactions with colleagues and greater levels of satisfaction.

How Do You Get in More Exercise at Work?

1. **Stand up at work.** While on the phone, stand or pace. Take a stretching break by extending your arms over your head or swinging your arms side to side. Try a twist at your waist or a triceps stretch to waken up your body and mind.
2. **Take fitness breaks.** Taking a quick walk around the building, a few hikes up and down the stairs, or even a few squats or lunges at your desk can get your blood pumping to beat an afternoon slump in the time it would take to get a cup of coffee.
3. **Keep fitness gear nearby.** Having a set of dumbbells or elastic bands at your desk can make fitting exercise into your workday easier. Repping out a few bicep curls while on the phone or performing some abductor moves with the band around your ankles can be done while typing on your computer. Many exercises can be done without taking you away from your work. It may be as simple as establishing a routine in your workday.

* For additional suggestions on how to exercise at your desk, check out this website.

If you have a workout facility or gym at your workplace, be sure to take advantage of it. Usually this is offered as a free service. If you pack your lunch, you will save the time you usually spend driving and waiting for food to be prepared. This time saved will give you the time to workout at lunch.

Even if you do not have a designated workout space within your building, going for a run or finding a nearby tennis court or gym will still allow you to use your lunch time to improve your health.

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind that will help you stay motivated to workout at lunch time:

1. **Choose physical activities that you enjoy doing.** You are more likely to stick with an exercise routine if you choose activities that you enjoy.
2. **Work out with a buddy.** Having someone hold you accountable helps you to show up on days you don't feel like it. You will have opportunities to return the favor with your friend as well. In addition to strengthening your health, you can strengthen relationships through this shared experience.
3. **Set goals.** Instead of just exercising for a set time or even a set number of days, set an achievement goal so that you feel that you are working toward something. Train for a race, a level of flexibility or a weight to lift. Set realistic goals and benchmarks along the way to get yourself to your goal.
4. **Participate in group activities.** Consider participating in a sport, like doubles tennis, where others depend on you. This will help keep you motivated to show up.
5. **Bring your lunch.** If you know you have a healthy lunch ready to eat after your workout, you will not feel like you need the time to run out and get lunch. It's already there.
6. **Keep a set of workout clothes at work.** The easiest excuse to not workout at lunch is that you have the

wrong clothes or shoes. Always keep an extra set of active clothes and shoes at work.

7. **High intensity for a shorter duration.** Results keep us motivated. If you have limited time to work out, make the best use of it. If you are cleared by your doctor to do so, workout at a higher intensity so you gain the same benefit in less time. For example, run for 30 minutes instead of walking for 60.

If your job is staying home with growing kids, include them in your workout routine. Kids need exercise too and will love the attention. Play active games. Roll a dice and let each number represent an activity. Do workouts in the park. If the kids fade out, they can play on the playground while you continue your routine.

Active lives may require a little creativity in the beginning. Once you find a system that works for you, make it a routine. Consistent exercise will reap the biggest reward. Most of us have busy lives. It may be very easy to come up with reasons why you can't fit exercise in your daily routine, but with a little effort and determination, you will be able to come up with solutions on how to fit exercise in your life. Your increased productivity and improved mood will make the time invested in your health well worth it.