

# How to Carve Out Time for Fitness

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As the dog days of summer begin to fade and the back-to-school season is underway, get back to basics and carve out time for fitness.

New Year's resolution time is often considered the best time to implement a new exercise fitness program. But when it comes to getting organized and inspired to jump into a regular

workout routine, now is the perfect time for you to create an exercise plan that suits your new family schedules.

While it's tempting to think that back-to-school time is "too busy" to be fitness-focused, consider this: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week, such as brisk walking, along with at least two sessions of strength-building workouts. You need to fit that in somewhere!

How do you do it? Start by creating a weekly or monthly calendar of your work hours, school commitments, appointments and other responsibilities, then set times for exercise as you would any other activity. This will help you pinpoint the time each day when you have the most time to exercise. Brainstorm ways you can patch together time for fitness – preferably a half-hour or more on most days. You can spread your activity out during the week so you don't have to do it all at once. You can even break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day. It's about what works best for you, as long as you're doing physical activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time.

According to a 2014 Gallup poll, 49.6 percent of Americans aged 18 to 24 reported exercising for at least 30 minutes three or more days per week. People generally exercise more in the spring and summer and less in the fall and winter. Frequent exercise usually drops to its lowest point in December of each year and begins to improve again in January. The cold weather, short days and slowed metabolisms make finding the energy to work out harder than during any other season.

If you're like a lot of people, all that stands between you and a greater fitness routine is an excuse or two. The number one favorite excuse for not exercising? I don't have time; my schedule is crazy. Fitting regular exercise into your daily

schedule may seem difficult at first but even 10 minutes at a time is fine. Lose the excuses and find your motivation to be active.

The benefits of exercise are well-known. The U.S Department of Health and Human Services acknowledges regular exercise as an effective way of preventing chronic illness such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease. Getting enough physical activity helps with weight management and prevents loss of muscularity and coordination due to aging. On a more short-term level, exercise enhances mood, reduces stress and contributes to a person's overall feeling of well-being.

### **How to Stay Fit During Back-to-School Madness**

In a NewsWise, University of the Sciences article, a kinesiology professor Karin Richards at University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, says now is the perfect time for people to create an exercise plan that suits their new family schedules. Richards said that these healthy guidelines can be easily achieved without blocking off a large chunk of the day or needing a gym membership.

1. **Create a schedule:** A weekly or monthly calendar of your work schedule, school functions, appointments and other responsibilities is a tangible source of planning that will help you identify the best time each day to fit in exercise.
2. **Break it up:** Even if you only have three 10-minute breaks throughout the day to squeeze in a workout, it's better than doing nothing. An outdoor walk during a lunch break is also a great way to include exercise into a busy schedule.
3. **Use your legs:** Skip the elevator and take the stairs; be sure to lift your knees high during each step. Also, rather than drop off your children at the bus stop, take a family walk to the stop and add in calf raises off the

curb while waiting for the bus to arrive.

4. **Use your body weight:** Push-ups, bridges, planks and squats are exercises that can be done in the privacy of your own home while watching television, listening to music or helping children with their homework. These exercises can be modified for beginners and advanced fitness levels.
5. **Stay active:** Instead of sitting in the car or bleachers while your child is at sports practice or play dates, consider jogging around the field or park during practice. You can still pay attention, but you are also burning calories.

Other articles:

[Newswise.com](http://Newswise.com)

[NJ.com](http://NJ.com)

[Health.usnews.com](http://Health.usnews.com)

[Exercise.about.com](http://Exercise.about.com)



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Paula is a master's graduate of Utah State University. She has worked in food and nutrition positions for approximately 20 years focusing on educating people in the community. Paula co-authored a national nutrition education curriculum for nutrition paraprofessionals. She is a Certified Family Home and Consumer Scientist, with experience in food and basic nutrition, and has always been interested in exercise and fitness, promoting the importance of nutrition and physical activity.