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Making time for exercise

Easy workouts for busy people

DES MOINES, IA (November 10, 2009) – When it comes to regular exercise, Americans have no shortage of excuses:

I'm too busy.

My office doesn't have a workout facility.

I travel a lot.

But according to Mollie Keitges, senior program manager at Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Well for Life Center, anyone can find time to exercise at the office, during a busy weekend, or even while traveling.

"You need to move if you want to be healthy," she says. "Taking a brisk walk during the day, or getting a simple workout with resistance bands are easy ways to stay in shape no matter how hectic your schedule."

Resistance bands are inexpensive, easy to pack in a briefcase or bag, and offer a variety of exercises to target different muscle groups. They can also help improve coordination and balance. Keitges also notes that the body provides enough resistance on its own. "Your gym teacher was right. Push-ups, sit-ups and lunges are easy (and free) ways to build and tighten your muscles."

The key is to get – and stay – motivated.

"The longest distance is between *thought* and *action*," Keitges says. "Five minutes is all it takes to get started, but you need to make it happen. Once you get past the first week, you'll probably be ready for more."

To stay motivated, Keitges suggests forming an "exercise club" with co-workers, and holding each other accountable to exercise goals.

An active vacation the key to prevent “scale shock”

Vacations present a different challenge. For most of us, vacation is a time to “let it go.” But a few days away from your routine, eating out frequently and not drinking enough water, is enough to undo weeks of progress.

“Vacation is when we need to exercise the most,” Keitges says. “Even 15 minutes is better than nothing, and it will help prevent the ‘scale shock’ when you return home.”

Simple exercises for people with disabilities

People with disabilities may find exercise especially difficult, especially in the absence of appropriate equipment, or a workout facility staffed by professionals trained to meet their needs.

For people with arthritis or other conditions that make it hard to exercise the arms and shoulders, a quick walk – even once or twice around the office – can still make a difference. So can standing squats and leg lifting exercises that stretch and tone the leg muscles.

For others who may have less mobility in their lower extremities, a small set of hand weights can provide a quick workout, and keep blood pumping through the arms. Wall push-ups (standing next to the wall and pushing yourself out), and sitting push-ups (pushing the upper body away from a desk or table) are additional suggestions.

Visit www.resistancebands.info, or www.acefitness.org/exerciselibrary for more information on easy exercise programs. Visit www.wellmark.com/walkingworks for more information on Wellmark’s *WalkingWorks*® program.

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