

Fit in fitness

We all know it's important to exercise, but it can be hard to find time in a busy day. These are just some of the ways you can squeeze in a little activity at any time of day to burn kilojoules and get fit



GET UP 10 MINUTES EARLIER

With kids, work and housework, it's a challenge finding 10 minutes to yourself. Getting up a bit earlier than the family will give you some much needed 'me time' to do a few stretches or have a quick walk or jog around the block. You'll be able to mentally prepare for the day and, when you follow up with a healthy breakfast, you've given your metabolism the best start to the day.

LEAVE THE CAR AT HOME

Think about how often you get the car out. Now, how many of those times do you actually need to use it? Could you walk the kids to school? Bike or walk to work or the shops? Next time you automatically open the car door, consider whether you could get to your destination another way. Combining walking with a small grocery run is a time-efficient way to exercise. And carrying bags is a great biceps work-out!

TAKE THE STAIRS

Let's face it, who doesn't use the lift if it's there? But next time you're at work, in a department store or anywhere else with a lift, take the stairs instead. Climbing stairs is great for your legs and bottom and is one of the best ways to burn fat – just 10 minutes a day will burn around 400kJ. Try taking stairs two at a time to maximise the firming effect.

SITTING PRETTY

If you're stuck at a desk all day, take a break every 30 minutes. Those quick trips to the photocopier add up over an eight-hour day. And if you really are stuck at your desk, log on to www.mydailyyoga.com which has great ideas for stretches to do at your desk. Try this one: Sit up tall in your chair, or if possible stand. Stretching your arms overhead and interlocking your fingers, turn palms to the ceiling. Take a deep breath in and when you exhale, stretch your sides and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Take another breath and when you exhale, stretch to the right. Inhale, come up and exhale while you stretch to the left.



USE YOUR LUNCH BREAK

It's so easy to use your lunch break to catch up on other things or just sit and eat at your desk – but if you used that time to walk for half an hour you would notice the difference to your energy levels in a matter of weeks! Your secret weapon could be your shoes – if you wear high heels to work, make sure you always have a flat pair to slip on for that lunchtime walk.

SQUAT TO IT!

Here's an exercise you can do anywhere, and it really works to tone your bottom and legs. With feet hip width apart, back straight and arms out in front of you, slowly lower down, stopping before you're seated. Push back up through your heels. repeat 5-10 times. To really feel the burn and tone up your thighs, hold one squat for 10 seconds – or longer if you can manage it!



FIDGET!

A recent study found that if you fidget more, you could burn off as much as an extra 1500kJ a day – that's the equivalent of a 40-minute power walk. So whatever you're doing, make use of your nervous energy. Drum your fingers at your desk, hop from one foot to the other at the bus stop, stretch while you're on the phone, jiggle your leg watching TV – it may drive other people mad, but it's well worth it.

PLAY AWAY

Do you have a budding sportsperson in the family? Play along with them – joining in that cricket game for 20 minutes will get your cardiovascular system pumping and help tone your legs and arms. Once a week, take your children to the pool or park and join in the fun – it's good for all of you and will help your child develop habits of taking regular exercise that will benefit them for the rest of their life.

SCHEDULE IT

Make a commitment to exercise by putting it in your diary or arranging to meet a friend – that way you're far more likely to actually do it. If you have a regular half-hour coffee with friends, for example, suggest going for a walk instead. Not only will you catch up on all the gossip, you'll burn an extra 740kJ.

TV TIME

Did you know you burn more calories sleeping than you do watching TV? But watching the box doesn't have to be dead time. Hide the remote – getting up to change channel will increase your level of incidental exercise. And use the ad breaks – run up and down stairs, skip or try this exercise: Support yourself on your chair with your hands flat on the edge, fingers forward, and legs bent. Keeping arms close to your body, lower yourself until arms are bent 90 degrees, then lift again.

