

10 Minutes at a Time: Simple Steps to Get Moving and Reduce Your Risk of Diabetes and Heart Disease

(ARA) - Want to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease? All it takes is 10 minutes of physical activity three times a day. Ten times three - it's really that simple. And it's what the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend to help you lower your blood pressure, manage your cholesterol and lose weight.

In the United States today, one in five people have diabetes, and heart disease is the leading cause of death. But exercising for 30 minutes each day can make a big difference in cutting your risk for these deadly diseases. And you don't have to hit the gym to reap the benefits of staying active. You can take three 10-minute walks after meals or find other simple ways to fit activity into your busy life.



According to health experts, any physical activity is better than none - and even the smallest steps can make a big difference. "Physical activity is particularly important for people at risk for diabetes and heart disease," says Dr. Peter Sheehan, senior faculty member at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. "Staying active can help lower risk in and of itself, and it can help patients lose weight, which also lowers risk. It's a double benefit."

HERE ARE THREE TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1. Stay active all day. It's easy to exercise while you're doing other things. On a visit to the grocery store, park at the far end of the lot and walk a lap around the inside of the store before you begin shopping. At work, take the stairs rather than the elevator - you might get to your floor faster anyway. At home, walk around while you chat on your cell phone. If you're babysitting, get down on the floor with the children and join in an activity.
2. Enjoy yourself. Even brisk exercise need not feel like a chore. You don't have to run at a track - you can play with your dog at the park. No need to drive all the way to the gym; you can garden for half an hour at home. It doesn't have to be a solo activity. Go for a stroll at the mall with a friend.
3. Make a game of it. Get a pedometer and count how many steps you take each day. Once you have an idea of how many steps you take in a day, set a goal to raise your average. Aim to add 100 steps every day until you reach 10,000, or work to add 1,000 a week.

To learn more about how physical activity can lower your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease, call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (342-2383), e-mail AskADA@diabetes.org or visit www.CheckUpAmerica.org. Be sure to ask for your copy of "Getting Started with Physical Activity."

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