

Breaking News! Get Healthy with Everyday Movement

Is it best to be generally active each day or sit around and then go to the gym three times a week? The best choice is being generally active each day. All those incidental movements we make all day long while shopping, cooking, cleaning, filing papers and working are far more important for our hearts, health and waistlines than we ever imagined. Turns out, everyday lifestyle activity—not just the occasional exercise session—is the REAL key to wellness.

Want Proof? Here are examples of studies that have emerged in the past three years:

--In a study of 168 men and women, Australian researchers reported that volunteers who took more breaks from sitting had slimmer waistlines, lower blood sugar levels, and healthier triglyceride and cholesterol profiles than those who sat the most. This was *regardless* of how much (or how little) moderate to vigorous exercise the subjects did.

--In another study, researchers found that every two hours of uninterrupted sitting on the job was associated with a 7% increase in your risk for developing diabetes. The reason? Muscles use blood sugar, and those muscles must be engaged, even minimally, in order for blood sugar to leave the bloodstream. When you sit for prolonged periods, your muscles are not active and blood sugar just stays in circulation.

--In groundbreaking research done at the Mayo Clinic, the link between everyday activity and weight was made powerfully clear. Doctors studied non-exercise activity (non-exercise activity thermogenesis—or NEAT) using space age motion-sensing underwear that tracked the wearers' each and every fidget. It found that the difference between men and women who are lean and those who are overweight is 150 minutes of NEAT activity each day. Subjects with healthy body weights stood, walked, strolled and generally pattered about 2 1/2 hours, enough to burn 350 calories more each day than their heftier counterparts.

Next time you circle the parking lot – choose to park farthest from the store. Have a choice between an elevator and stairs? Try a few flights of stairs. At the home or office, make time to get up from your chair and walk, whether for a purpose or just to stretch, you'll feel better.

Yes, formal exercise is still great for you. Aerobic exercise strengthens your heart and lungs and strong muscles burn more calories, boost your energy and have numerous other benefits.

Source: Reader's Digest Association, Inc. Reverse Diabetes April 9, 2010.