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Take Ten

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Are you working 10-hour days while juggling kids, your spouse, and the dog? Do you ever think, "Hey, I know fitness is important, but there's no way I can fit in a 30-minute workout three times a week?" Well, I can relate. I'm a mom to two little girls, a wife, and the owner of my own company. And there are moments when even I wonder how I'm going to fit fitness in. But the truth is, fitness isn't a luxury – it's a life or death issue. If you want to live a longer, healthier life, you need to stay active. Period. So what's a person to do?

Taking "Ten"

According to the [International Task Force for Prevention of Coronary Heart Disease](#), dividing your exercise regimen into three, 10-minute segments is acceptable. While we all lament about not having 30-minutes to ourselves, I bet we can all find 10 free minutes here and there throughout the day. Here are some ideas.

At Home

There are so many ways to stay active at home. The best way to find an extra 10 minutes is in the morning. Simply set your alarm 15 minutes earlier (we can all handle that, right?). Take five minutes to wake up, and use the other 10 minutes on exercise.

- Create a mini "circuit" in your spare bedroom or basement. Have three to five different "stations" (10 lb hand-weights for one, a jump rope for two, and maybe an exercise ball for three). Spend one minute on each "station" (use an egg timer or watch) and rotate to the next station. Repeat and workout for ten minutes. This is good to do while watching the morning news or listening to the radio. In ten minutes, you'll be done and your heart will be pumping. Studies show that exercising in the morning benefits you throughout the day by raising your metabolism. Make sure you eat breakfast, too. Breakfast gives your metabolism a jump-start.

Don't want to wake up an extra 15 minutes early? Here are some other ideas:

- Speed walk for 10 minutes with the dog (don't worry – he'll keep up).
- Waiting for water to boil? Do lunges or squats as you wait.
- Vacuuming? Do leg kicks as you zoom around the house.
- Watching your favorite TV show? Use your exercise ball during commercials (there are a variety of exercises from ab crunches to butt lifters).



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- Start a tradition of taking a walk after dinner with the family. Families that exercise together, stay fit together.
- Waiting for the washing machine to fill with water? Keep some hand weights handy.
- Do your kids walk to school? Try walking with them sometimes.
- Do the kids want you to play soccer or basketball with them in the afternoon or after dinner? Do it. Don't say you're too busy – take the time to be with them and to get fit while you're at it. Some other fun activities that don't seem like exercise include volleyball, swimming, playing tag, ultimate Frisbee, tennis, and swinging.
- Are you a parent who volunteers to coach the kids? Make sure you warm up and run laps with them.
- While you're brushing your teeth or drying your hair, you can also do some lunges, squats, or leg lifts (use ankle weights for added benefit).

At the Office

Keep a pair of sneakers and socks at the office. Stash a set of hand weights and elastic weight bands (available at stores like Wal-Mart, Target, and TJ Maxx) in your bottom drawer or beneath your desk. If you have the room, consider keeping an exercise ball in the office as well.

- Do you have a lunch hour or even a half hour? Take a brisk 10-minute walk outside, across the parking lot, or even around the inside of the building (using the stairs is an extra benefit). Invite a colleague to go with you, and you can motivate each other.
- Do arm exercises (such as curls or lifts) when you're on the phone (put the phone on speaker or use a headset).
- Do squats or leg lunges in between meetings.
- Instead of taking a coffee break, try doing as many crunches as possible on the floor or on your exercise ball.
- Do you work in a cube (meaning you have no privacy?) – many arm exercises can be done sitting at your desk. You can do leg lifts and calf raises with ankle weights at your desk as well.
- Park your car at the far end of the parking lot (yes, even when it's cold and raining. The only exception is if it's at night and it doesn't feel safe – always consider safety first).
- Is there a spare office that could be turned into a mini-gym? Talk to management about using it for that purpose. Many managers and HR departments embrace the idea (a healthy employee is a more productive employee). Invite a personal trainer to come in once or twice a week to show employees how to exercise at work.
- Go up and down the stairs for ten minutes.

Out and About

Do you sometimes feel like a chauffeur or a personal assistant? While you may feel you're always racing around, there's often down-time.

- While you're waiting in the car for the kids to get out of school (try arriving 10 minutes early), get out and do some leg exercises. Keep some hand weights in the car and work on your arms as well.
- Waiting in line at the supermarket? Do some arm curls with a gallon of milk. Do a couple of extra "laps" around the store before getting in the checkout line. Combine this with parking your car at the end of the parking lot, and you've probably done ten minutes worth of exercise.
- Running errands? Park your car as far away from your destination as you can (as

long as you're safe) and briskly walk to the store.

- Going shopping in the mall? Before you make a purchase, walk the mall for 10 minutes (some malls even have morning "walk groups" – perfect during cold weather).
- Going to the beach? Use your water bottles as weights and do some exercises before jumping in the water.
- Heading to an amusement park with the family? Trade off with your spouse – while he or she is waiting in line with the kids, do a 10-minute walk around the park.
- Plan vacations that involve exercise – whether it's hiking, swimming, mountain climbing, or walking the Freedom Trail, make sure you stay active.

If you start looking for 10-minute "free" intervals, I guarantee you'll find them. Put them to good use and stay fit (it won't even feel like exercise since you're doing it for only 10 minutes). Your body and heart will thank you for it.

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Serving Stow, Hudson, Marlboro, Framingham, Sudbury, Harvard, Boxboro, Littleton
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