

(wellness works!)

# Fast Fitness for Busy People



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**WHAT'S THE NO. 1** roadblock to exercise? Time. Finding the time to re-energize and get fit is always a challenge. Lack of time is the most common reason given not to exercise. Many people who take an all-or-nothing approach do no physical activity at all.

The American College of Sports Medicine guidelines for exercise are to accumulate a minimum 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week and do strength training 2-3 times a week.

Sounds unattainable? Only 20 percent of U.S. adults are meeting recommended activity guidelines for both aerobic and muscle strengthening; 50 percent of adults are meeting the recommended amounts of aerobic activity; and 30 percent are meeting the recommended muscle-strengthening activity.

The good news is that research now supports the effectiveness of repeated short bursts of intense exercise followed by varied recovery times as an alternative to traditional gym or long duration workouts. Applying maximal effort to a

workout as short as 4 minutes has been found to give the similar fitness benefits as a 30-minute moderate intensity activity. Exercise can be done anywhere, anytime. Depending on the type of exercise (aerobic vs. strength training) and intensity, you may or may not break a sweat. This bite-sized approach to fitness makes it easy for people to "fit" fitness into their busy lives, including during the workday. Fast, micro-bursts of fitness (also called high-intensity interval training or HIIT) is a practical, efficient, and fun way to get maximum benefits in minimum time.

Here's how HIIT works. Take just 10 minutes a day, three times a week to either augment your current exercise routine (add interval training to your power walk or run) or do as a self-contained workout. If 10 minutes at once is too long, take several minutes a few times a day. Some activity is better than none.

Include both aerobic and strength training activities in your HIIT routine. You can cram in a combination of cardiovascular exercise and resistance

training using your own body weight instead of machines or free weights. Alternatively, you can split the exercises so that you are doing aerobic activities in the morning and/or evening and strength training throughout the workday. The key is to push yourself as hard as you can (e.g., 30 seconds to 8 minutes long), pause to recover and catch your breath (e.g., 15 seconds to a minute) before doing another burst of activity. Alternate between work and recovery intervals. Using the "talk test" as your guide, the work interval should feel like you are carrying on a conversation with difficulty. The recovery period may last as long as the work periods.

Start by practicing 30-second sprints of aerobic activity (interspersed with 15 second recovery periods) 2-3 times a week. As you become more aerobically fit, build up the sprint time (and recovery time) to a minute or more at a time. Perform as many strength-training repetitions as you can within 30 seconds, 2-3 times a week. Increase the duration to a minute once you are able. Strength training can be done in conjunction with aerobic activities or alone.

If your typical excuse for not exercising is lack of time, fast fitness will change the way you will think about exercise. Micro-bursts of fitness make it easier to integrate into everyday lives and burn more calories and fat. An added benefit is the delivery of immediate energy to boost alertness and productivity during the workday. ■

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Fast Aerobic Activities	Fast Strength Training Activities
Cycling	Push ups
Running	Triceps dips
Swimming	Planks
Rowing	Side planks
Hill running or walking	Planks with arm and leg raises
Fast walking	Abdominal crunches
Jump rope	Abdominal curls
Jumping jacks	Step-ups on a chair
Burpies	Wall sits
High Knee running	Squats
Mountain climbers	Lunges
Stair climbing	Bear crawls