

Easy Burn

Five fun (and inexpensive) ways to build exercise into your daily routine

> It's no secret that Americans are getting heavier. Need proof? Look no further than the U.S. Coast Guard. In late 2011, the venerable institution changed its weight restrictions on seagoing vessels from 160 pounds per person to 185 pounds (72.5 to 84 kg.), due to its new Assumed Average Weight per Person index—news that is unsettling enough to make many of us rethink our eating and exercise habits.

Two of the biggest factors at play in

our struggle to exercise and lose or maintain weight are a lack of time and aversion to the traditional activities we normally consider as exercise—a visit to the gym, a spin class, running. While gym memberships and Zumba are great, they aren't the only way to get in shape. Working physical activity into your day is easy—and free.

Carrie McFadden, an exercise physiologist at Towson University in Maryland, advises “asking yourself what you can

do at home a little differently.”

“Maybe mow your own lawn instead of paying someone to do it,” she suggests. “Or get out and walk your dog.”

You also can find ways to exercise at your workplace, notes registered dietitian Jessica Crandall. She suggests easy activities like doing push-ups or squats against an office wall or jumping jacks, if space and privacy allows.

Here, find five tips for activities that will burn an estimated 300 calories.



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Combined with cutting just 250 calories from your daily intake (just one 20-ounce soda), this small burn will put you on a path to losing slightly more than a pound per week. Estimates are based on an average weight of 160 pounds (72.5 kg.) and are calculated via the American Council on Exercise's Physical Activity Calorie Calculator.

Have Some Fun

Playing games with your kids, your friends or your pet can be an enjoyable way to be active. Forty minutes of kickball, soccer or touch football burns nearly 350 calories, while an hour of shooting baskets burns just over 300. And don't feel like you have to play a regulation game. "Kicking a soccer ball to an active puppy can be a great workout," says McFadden.

Get Out the Broom

Most people don't realize it (at least

until their muscles ache the next day), but over time, work done around the house can build muscle and heart strength in the same way a gym workout can. One hour of moderate yardwork will burn 290 calories. More intense activities—say digging vegetable beds, shoveling snow or pushing a mower for an hour—will consume closer to 400 calories. And don't overlook vacuuming and other housework. Ninety minutes of picking up around the house burns 327 calories.

Grab and Go

You don't need a bench press to benefit from weight training. Crandall suggests using hand weights at home, particularly during sedentary time, say when you're watching television. You need 90 minutes of activity to reach the 300-calorie goal, so consider breaking your workout into shorter segments (like grabbing the

weights each time there's a commercial break during a big football game).

Put One Foot in Front of the Other

Walking is one of the easiest, convenient and most affordable ways to exercise. If you're a multi-tasker, consider listening to books on your MP3 player while taking a brisk 50-minute walk. If you need a walking buddy to get you moving, what about forming a lunchtime walking club at work?

Stand and Stretch

Standing burns more calories than sitting and it's better for your back. If your work is sedentary, consider changing your traditional desk to a standing desk where you may burn slightly more than 300 calories in two hours. Stretching is also crucial to maintaining a healthy back. Stretching or gentle yoga done in small intervals throughout the day can provide comfort—and burn calories. ◀

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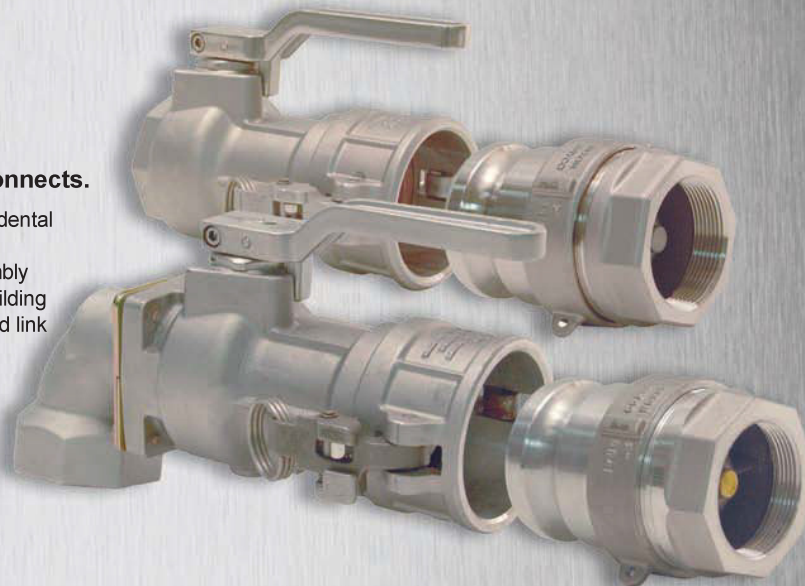
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