

The Lazy Exercise Guide for busy people

This guide is not intended to replace a regular workout, but aims to offer general advice for people who need to exercise but don't know where to start. It could be what you need to help inspire you to take up a more physically active lifestyle.

It is important that you consult with your GP or a chartered physiotherapist before embarking on any new fitness regime. If any of the exercises in the guide cause you to feel discomfort, stop immediately and seek medical advice.

How to find a chartered physiotherapist:

Speak to your GP about a referral to your local physiotherapy service. Alternatively, visit www.physio2u.org.uk for a list of private practitioners in your local area.



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If you lead a busy lifestyle and cannot find the time to take up an intensive exercise programme, The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy has come up with a few tips on how to turn your routine or daily activities into a workout. You should think about carrying out these activities little and often.

STARTING THE DAY

We understand that people are very busy and just want to get on with their lives, but you can turn your morning ablutions into a workout...

- Whilst brushing your teeth – march on the spot.
- During your shower – stand tall by elongating yourself and taking in deep breaths.
- When towel drying your back – loosen your shoulders, grasp the ends of the towel in both hands behind you, one hand should be near one shoulder and the other by the opposite hip – dry your back up and down in a diagonal direction and then switch sides.
- Whilst getting dressed – elongate your limbs by gently stretching into your clothes.



TRAVELLING TO WORK

Sitting in your car, on a tube, train or bus is a great opportunity to carry out a discreet workout.

IN THE CAR

- If you travel to work by car – make sure your car seat is supportive, comfortable and allows you to sit in an upright position. Always try and sit tall in your car – slouching is bad for your back!
- Exercising your pelvic floor muscle is a great way to work your pelvic girdle. It can help firm up the abdomen and contribute to good pelvic health. Work your pelvic floor muscle by pulling yourself up and in as if you're stopping yourself from going to the toilet. Hold this position for 10-seconds before relaxing and repeat this 10 times. Alternatively, while sitting at red traffic lights, repeat the same exercise but hold for 2-seconds then relax and repeat this 10 times.

NB: Don't do anything that compromises your concentration!

ON THE BUS, TRAIN OR TUBE

- If you are lucky enough to find a seat, sit tall and hold in your tummy muscles for 10-seconds then release. Try to repeat this as often as you can during your journey. If you are standing, straighten your posture by standing tall, clench your buttock muscles and hold in your abdomen.
- Get off a stop earlier and walk briskly for the remainder of your journey – approximately 10-15 minutes. Do the reverse for your journey back home. You'll be able to clock up 20-30 minutes of physical activity each day and will soon feel the benefit.
– the same could be applied to your car journey – park just short of your destination and make a brisk walk part of your travelling routine.
- If and where possible, walk up and down escalators.

NB: It may not be a bad idea to keep your work shoes in the office and wear your trainers. This will make brisk walking and stair climbing more comfortable.

- If you are carrying bags, make sure the weight of the bags is balanced between the shoulders. If you use a rucksack, the contents should be evenly distributed so not to put unnecessary stresses and strains on your back and shoulders. If it has two straps – use one over each shoulder.

AT THE OFFICE

- Make sure your workstation is set up to suit your needs. It is very easy to suffer discomfort if you are not sitting properly or using furniture and equipment correctly.

NB: Ask your employer for a workstation assessment. If this service is not available, consult a chartered physiotherapist for advice on how to make best use of your workstation.

- Be sure to get up from your desk little and often.
- If you have to sit for a living, take regular breaks. Break up the prolonged sitting by getting up and going for a 20-minute walk.
- When sitting at your desk, make sure you are sitting upright. Try placing a bottle of mineral water between your thighs and squeeze it with your legs – keep your feet flat on the floor.
- Avoid using the lift. Take the stairs instead – stair climbing is a great workout and can increase the strength in your hips, legs and buttocks.
- When at a photocopier, stand up straight, hold on to the machine, then raise one leg behind you or to one side, keeping it straight, then return it to the floor. Try and repeat this action eight times then switch to the other leg.



GOING FOR LUNCH

- Go on a discovery walk to try out a different café. The fresh air and brisk walk will do you some good.
- If you're waiting in line at a café or bank, standing still is a good way to get into shape because you can exercise your back and abdominal muscles and improve your posture. Lift your chest, push your shoulders back and down, pull in your abdomen and clench your buttocks. Hold for eight seconds then release but repeat the action about 15 times.

FOR THE HOME-WORKER

More and more people are opting to work from home, whether part-time or full-time. It is important to make time during the day for some exercise.

- At lunchtime, walk to the shops, post office or post box. If you can, walk to one further away.
- Whenever you are sitting at your desk, squeeze your buttocks, pull in your tummy muscles and try and stretch out your arms and legs and loosen your shoulders regularly to prevent stiffening up.

BACK AT HOME

- While waiting for the kettle to boil – stand on your toes (feet slightly apart), squeeze your buttocks and gently bend your knees then straighten up again. Repeat the action a few times.
- Before settling down to dinner, walk up and down the stairs a few times – this is great if you've been inactive all day.
- While watching TV, sit on a dining chair or something similar and see how long you can sit up straight. This is a great way to elongate yourself, especially if you have been hunched up at a computer all day.
- If you've crashed out on your sofa to watch TV make sure you've placed pillows in the small of your back. This will help keep you upright and supported.
- Instead of using the remote control, get up and change the channel. Sit on the edge of the sofa, keep your back straight, tummy tucked in, buttocks squeezed then stand up and sit down five times before going to the TV to change the channel.
- Use commercial breaks in programmes to do a mini-workout such as leg raises (as described when at the office by the photocopier), shoulder rolling and circular ankle movements.
- Another thing to try whilst watching TV is to lie down on your back. Open up your arms and fingers on either side of your body, but keep them on the floor. Slide them out in a V-shape towards your head. This is a great way to unwind after a long, hard day.



CARRYING OUT THE HOUSE WORK

Housework is a fantastic way to exercise. Think about turning some of your tasks into a workout.

- When vacuuming – use long, drawn-out movements and use the whole body as opposed to just the arm. Draw the abdomen in and take deep breaths.
- When ironing – pull the tummy in and iron from the abdomen in addition to the shoulder.
- If you're loading/unloading the washing machine, or polishing in low places, try repeated squat movements. Keep your legs slightly apart and your back straight. Bend your knees and lower yourself down into a sitting position but keep your back straight and squeeze in your tummy muscles. Make sure you don't go too low and then return slowly back to the starting position.

SOCIALISING

Going out for an evening or meeting up with friends is another example of fitting a bit of exercise into your day.

- When going out with friends, meet slightly earlier and go for a 30-minute walk together before dinner, drinks or a movie. It'll help get your metabolism going...
- If you're dining out with friends, make sure you're sitting upright – challenge yourself to sit taller than your friends and keep your tummy in!
- On weekends, meet up with friends and go for a swim, a bike ride or dancing – these activities are enjoyable and stimulating as well as sociable.

