

## Title: Small Ways to Stay Active When You're Short on Time

With a busy schedule, movement can take a back seat. And yet, when you incorporate movement into your day, you physically feel better and your stress decreases. Making time for regular exercise has been shown to improve our ability to make complex decisions and boost our mood, which can help us better navigate the other areas of our lives that may be stressful. And if you don't have time for a traditional workout, prioritizing small bursts of movement – even a stretch – can also help you reset and boost your energy.

If you're looking for small ways to stay active without hitting the gym, here are a few creative tips to try:

### Start your day with a quick stretch.

Beginning your morning with a three or five-minute stretching routine can awaken your body and set the tone for the day ahead. This practice can improve flexibility and circulation, and even enhance mental alertness. You can even habit-stack it onto another morning ritual, like catching up on the news, calling a loved one to say hi, or waiting for the toaster to beep.

### Try a “one-song workout”

Put on one song you love and just move your body -- with jumping jacks, lunges, or your go-to dance moves. One 2019 study from the University of British Columbia found that people worked harder in their workouts and enjoyed them more when listening to upbeat music. “Music is typically used as a dissociative strategy,” study co-author Matthew Stork, a postdoctoral fellow in the School of Health and Exercise Sciences, explains -- so moving around to your favorite song for just two or three minutes will fly by!

### Take the stairs instead of the elevator.

Opt for the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible. This small choice increases your heart rate, strengthens your lower body, and releases endorphins. It only takes a few extra minutes and it's a great way to transform a mundane part of your routine into an opportunity for movement.

### Do a 60-second wall sit in between meetings.

All you need is one minute for this challenging exercise! In between meetings, place your feet firmly on the ground, shoulder-width apart, and about two feet out from the wall. Then, slide your back down the wall while keeping your core engaged and bending your knees until they're in a 90-degree angle. Hold for 60 seconds and feel the burn in your core and legs! After a few weeks, you can try to work up to two minutes.

### Include your kids in a nightly stretch or a dance party.

Getting moving with your kids can be a great way to establish a new family ritual, teach them healthy habits at a young age, and bond before bed. Show your kids how to do a child's pose or downward dog before you read them their bedtime stories, or break into a dance party after dinner! Your kids will love taking the chance to move around and be silly, and it's a great way to get your heart rate up for a couple minutes while having fun.