

HEALTH
FITNESS
NUTRITION
WELL-BEING

Matters®

10 FAST FACTS

To help control your weight, plan your meals and snacks. Haphazard eating often leads to overeating.

Avoid sleeping on your stomach as this stresses the neck. Try to sleep on your side or back.

The average desk harbours 400 times more bacteria than the average toilet seat. Sanitize your desk regularly.

Boredom is one of the top reasons why people give up on a fitness regime. To beat boredom, try working out with a friend.

Caffeine can increase levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Avoid caffeinated foods and beverages if you have anxiety.

Eating fibre helps you feel fuller, which curbs appetite. It also promotes intestinal health by speeding the elimination of cancer-causing waste products.

Adequate sleep is vital for children. Growth hormones are released during sleep, supporting both overall growth and the repair of muscles.

You can reduce the amount of salt in canned vegetables and tuna by one-third simply by rinsing and draining them first.

Even smokers are at risk from second-hand smoke. Smoking in a confined area over the day can cause the smoker to inhale the equivalent of three extra cigarettes.

Keeping an aquarium is a health-promoting hobby. Watching fish swim relaxes the mind and body, reduces blood pressure and relieves stress.

Break Free from Anxiety



Feeling a little nervous or anxious in response to certain situations (e.g., taking an exam or dealing with an emergency) is normal. However, if you constantly experience feelings of fear, anxiety or worry, to the point where it is interfering with your life and work, you may have an anxiety disorder.

It's conservatively estimated that 12% of Canadians are affected by one (or more) of six anxiety disorders (Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Panic Disorder (with or without agoraphobia), Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder or Specific Phobia).

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is one of the most common anxiety disorders, with symptoms that include excessive worrying, restlessness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, trembling, sweating, rapid heartbeat and sleeplessness. Other symptoms of an anxiety disorder can include sudden panic attacks, irrational fears or avoidance behaviours (e.g., a person develops a sudden fear of elevators and stops using them).

Anxiety disorders are twice as common in women as in men and tend to run in families. Childhood trauma, illness, stress, an underlying personality disorder, substance abuse or depression can also influence the development of an anxiety disorder. Many people with anxiety try to self-medicate using alcohol or marijuana. Unfortunately, these substances make symptoms worse.

The good news is that anxiety disorders are highly treatable, typically through a combination of psychological counselling and medications.

Psychological counselling (talk therapy) is a very effective treatment. It helps people with anxiety to better understand their stressors and teaches strategies to help manage them. Another approach called cognitive-behavioural therapy involves identifying negative thoughts and behaviours and replacing them with positive alternatives.

The most common medications used in the treatment of anxiety are a select group of antidepressants, which influence the brain chemicals that may play a role in anxiety, and benzodiazepines like lorazepam (Ativan) or alprazolam (Xanax) – sedative drugs that provide effective, short-term relief from anxiety symptoms.

Don't allow fear, worry or anxiety to continue to disrupt your life at home and at work. There are highly effective treatments available to help you. Talk to your doctor.

Helpful resources for people experiencing anxiety include:

Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada

www.anxietycanada.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association

www.cmha.ca

Mood Disorders Society of Canada

www.mooddisorderscanada.ca



three Binge eating

six Snoring

four Creative calorie-cutting

seven Neck pain

Hold the Salt

Canadians are eating too much salt, putting many at risk for serious health problems.



The 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey revealed that Canadian adults consume an average of 3,092 milligrams of sodium daily – more than double Health Canada’s recommended 1,500 mg per day. Similar high intakes have also been shown in children and teenagers.

Salt itself is not the problem. Sodium helps balance fluids in the body, assists in the transmission of nerve impulses and influences the action of muscles. It’s eating too much salt that constitutes a health hazard.

Excessive amounts of salt cause the body to retain water. This increases blood volume, leading to increased risk of high blood pressure – a major

contributor to heart disease and stroke. Over time, high blood pressure can damage blood vessel walls and contribute to a buildup of artery-clogging plaque. Very high blood pressure can also cause blood vessels in the brain to burst, resulting in a stroke.

Sodium occurs naturally in many foods, plus there’s the salt that’s added during cooking and serving. However, the biggest contributor to excessive salt intake comes from the consumption of processed and fast foods, which account for more than 75% of the sodium in most diets.

Here’s a look at the amount of sodium contained in some popular convenience foods.

Popular foods	Sodium content (mg)
1 McDonald’s Big Mac	1020
½ cup/125 mL Campbell’s Condensed Cream of Mushroom soup	850
1 cup/250 mL Kraft Macaroni and Cheese – Original (cooked)	561
1 Tbsp./15 mL regular soy sauce	500 – 2000
2 oz./50 g Lay’s Potato Chips – Classic	330
½ cup/125 mL canned vegetables	215 – 800
1 Tbsp./15 mL Kraft Peanut Butter – Smooth	70
½ cup/125 mL frozen mixed vegetables	40 – 300

Reducing salt intake helps lower blood pressure. Instead of using salt to flavour food, try using herbs, spices and garlic during food preparation. At the table, substitute pepper or a salt-free seasoning blend for salt. Most importantly, work at limiting processed and fast-food consumption. Your heart will thank you.

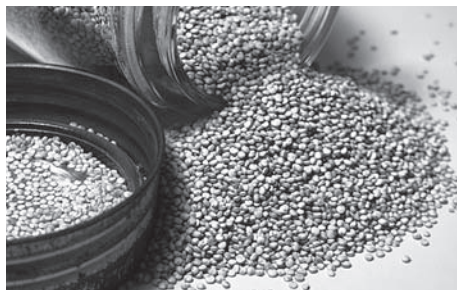
Discover Quinoa

Foods, like fashion, cycle in popularity. So it is with quinoa (pronounced keen-wa), a grain-like food once revered by the Incas.

Quinoa “grains” are really seeds harvested from the quinoa plant – a relative to Swiss chard – and can be cooked just like rice.

Unlike rice and wheat, which lack the amino acid lysine, quinoa offers a complete source of protein, as well as iron, magnesium and fibre. It’s also gluten-free.

Quinoa has a slight nutty flavour. It can easily be transformed into a side dish by adding lemon, parsley and garlic, or diced tomato, cilantro and



jalapeño. Try boiling it in reduced-salt vegetable or chicken broth. Use quinoa in stir-fries or stews, or add cooked, cooled quinoa to a fresh salad.

FALL RECIPE

Hearty Cabbage



Cabbage, in all its varieties (green, red, Chinese, savoy and winter cabbage), is an exceptional source of nutrients. One cup (250 mL) of steamed cabbage contains only 35 calories and yet is very high in vitamins C, K, E

and A as well as health-promoting phytochemicals. It’s also inexpensive, which means cabbage delivers excellent nutritional bang for your buck.

Cabbage can be added to meals raw in salads or cooked in soups, stews, casseroles or tasty rolls. Try adding steamed chopped cabbage to a chicken and sesame seed stir-fry.



TANGY CABBAGE SALAD

Makes 8 servings

Salad

- ½ small head green cabbage, coarsely grated
- ½ small head red cabbage, coarsely grated
- 6 green onions, sliced diagonally
- 1 large carrot, peeled, coarsely grated
- 1 Tbsp. (15 mL) toasted sesame seeds

Dressing

- ⅓ c. (80 mL) seasoned rice vinegar
- 1½ cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) freshly grated ginger
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) soy sauce
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) sesame oil

1. Combine salad ingredients in a large bowl. Refrigerate until serving.
2. Whisk together dressing ingredients. Drizzle over salad immediately before serving.

Per serving: 377 calories; 72 g carbohydrate; 18 g protein; 8 g fat; 27 g fibre

The cardiologist’s diet: If it tastes good, spit it out.

Author unknown

Acrylamide Alert

Most people already know that french fries and potato chips are poor food choices because they contain such high levels of saturated and trans fats. But, there's another reason to steer clear of these greasy temptations: they contain elevated amounts of acrylamide – a naturally occurring chemical that forms when foods rich in carbohydrates and low in protein are processed or cooked at very high temperatures. What makes acrylamide so worrisome is that it's known to cause cancer in animals.

Health Canada reports that acrylamide isn't present in food before cooking and does not appear as a result of contamination during food preparation. What's been found is that cooking foods at very high temperatures produces a chemical reaction between an amino acid called asparagine and the naturally occurring sugars in food, resulting in the formation of acrylamide.

The effects of exposure to acrylamide on human health aren't known, and there are currently no guidelines on safe maximum dietary limits of foods containing acrylamide.

Common sources of acrylamide include cookies, breakfast cereals, bread, pastries, rolls, roasted almonds and cocoa products. French fries and potato chips typically contain the highest levels. However, acrylamide isn't limited to fast-food or store-bought items. It can also appear in foods prepared at home.

To reduce exposure to acrylamide, pay close attention to cooking temperatures. For french fries, don't exceed 350°F (175°C) when deep-frying and



450°F (230°C) when baking. Toast bread to the lightest colour possible, because a dark crust has higher levels of acrylamide than the rest of the bread.

Some food manufacturers have adjusted their cooking instructions to help reduce acrylamide levels in their products. Nationally, Health Canada is working with food processors and the food service industry to develop guidelines and explore strategies for the reduction of acrylamide in foods.

The best way to minimize your risk of exposure to acrylamide is to limit your consumption of processed and fast foods.

Binge Eating

Binge eating, also known as compulsive eating disorder, is a condition characterized by periods of uncontrolled or continuous eating interrupted by periods of fasting or dieting.

People struggling with binge-eating disorder are often overweight or obese, which puts them at increased risk for developing Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, among other health problems. They may eat more quickly than the average person, eat until they're uncomfortably full, eat when they're not hungry, or insist on eating alone. Those with the condition frequently report feelings of disgust or guilt after overeating – feelings that often launch them into a vicious cycle: the more negative the emotions, the greater the need to resort to food for solace.

The causes of compulsive eating are complex and include psychological factors such as depression, low self-esteem and loneliness. A history of physical or sexual abuse is not uncommon. There could be a biological basis as well: some research has found that people with eating disorders have an imbalance of the brain chemicals that control hunger, appetite and digestion.

The good news is that people with a compulsive eating disorder can get better. Treatment typically involves psychotherapy, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, nutritional guidance and (in some cases) medication such as antidepressants.

If you're caught up in an unhealthy relationship with food, consult your doctor or a dietitian. It's the first step to creating a happier and healthier you.



Healthier Now – Turn Off the TV

A Canadian study based on the 2007 Canadian Community Health Survey has found that the more time people spend in front of the television, the more likely they are to be obese. Reduce the amount of time you spend in front of a TV or computer in favour of walking the dog, pursuing a hobby or doing an activity. Even moderate activity can help you control your weight.

Television is like the American toaster, you push the button and the same thing pops up every time.

Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) English film director

Creative Calorie-Cutting

A dietary approach to weight loss that constantly leaves you feeling deprived of your favourite foods is doomed to failure. In fact, nothing makes you desire a food more than thinking you can't have it. That's why a well-rounded diet that includes modest amounts of occasional treats is much more likely to help you achieve your objective.

Successful weight loss also doesn't have to involve making revolutionary changes to what you eat. If you're already eating a reasonably varied diet, even small adjustments can dramatically cut calories without essentially changing anything. It's about making the right choices. Here are 10 simple examples:



1 egg or 2 egg whites
78 cal or 32
1 cup of mashed potatoes or
½ baked potato
132 cal or 66



Favourite Food	Calorie-cutting Choice
3 oz./85 g skinless turkey, dark meat 159	3 oz./85 g skinless turkey, white meat 115
1 cup/250 mL 2% milk 128	1 cup/250 mL 1% milk 108
1 egg 78	2 egg whites 32
1 cup/250 mL cranberry cocktail 155	1 cup/250 mL half water/half cocktail 76
2 slices of whole wheat bread (traditional sandwich) 140	1 slice of whole wheat bread (open face sandwich) 70
1 cup/250 mL Frosted Flakes 140	1 cup/250 mL Corn Flakes 101
1 cup/250 mL cream of chicken soup 188	1 cup/250 mL chicken noodle soup 79
1 oz./28 g cheddar cheese 114	1 oz./28 g fat-free cheddar cheese 40
1 cup/250 mL mashed potatoes 132	½ baked potato 66
½ cup/125 mL rich vanilla ice cream 188	½ cup/125 mL vanilla frozen yogurt 121
Total Calories: 1,422	Total Calories: 808

By slightly modifying our food choices, we were able to offer virtually the identical foods while saving a whopping 614 calories. Examine what you eat and think about lower-calorie options, and be conscious of portion sizes too (just because a food is lower in calories doesn't mean you should be eating more of it). The bottom line is that you can cut calories without compromising on many of the foods you love.

Exercise Lowers Blood Sugar Levels



Regular exercise has many important health benefits, not the least of which is improving the body's response to insulin – the hormone responsible for metabolizing sugar in the body. Regular, moderate exercise trains the body to keep blood sugar levels stable, thereby lowering your risk for developing diabetes. It's also an excellent blood sugar management tool for people already living with diabetes.

In healthy people, the pancreas releases insulin when the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood increases, such as after eating. One of the things insulin does is stimulate cells to take in excess glucose, which lowers blood sugar levels.

Blood sugar actually plays an important role during physical exercise by fuelling cells. For example, a sudden burst of activity (e.g., sprinting to catch the bus) causes the liver to release enough stored glucose to power the action. During longer or more vigorous exercise sessions, the muscles use even more glucose (almost 20 times the normal rate), which dramatically lowers glucose levels in the blood.

Exercise causes the body to use up glucose and thereby helps keep blood sugar levels in a normal range, which explains why regular exercise is so critical, not only in preventing diabetes, but also in enhancing the health of people already living with the disorder. Regular exercise also helps control weight, reduces body fat, improves the body's response to insulin and strengthens the heart, making it one of the best things you can do to support your health.

Note: People with diabetes are at higher risk for heart disease and should consult a physician before embarking on a vigorous exercise program. Exercise can also make the body more sensitive to insulin, which can lead blood sugar levels to be too low. Talk to your doctor about optimal blood sugar levels both before and after exercise.

I generally avoid temptation, unless I can't resist it.
Mae West (1892-1980) American actress

Fibromyalgia



Aerobic exercise and cognitive-behavioral therapy have been shown to be effective in alleviating pain and other fibromyalgia-related symptoms.



Every joint and muscle in your body hurts and you constantly feel exhausted. If these key symptoms persist,

they may be an indication of fibromyalgia (FM) – a chronic, painful inflammation of the muscles and fibrous tissues of the body.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition characterized by fatigue and widespread pain and stiffness in the muscles, tendons and ligaments (the actual joints are spared). Other symptoms include difficulty sleeping, lack of energy, headache and anxiety. These can vary depending on the weather, stress levels and even the time of day.

There is no definitive medical test for FM. Diagnosis requires a thorough physical examination, including an evaluation of

reflexes and muscular tone, strength and co-ordination, as well as a review of a person’s medical history. Additional exams and blood tests may be necessary to rule out other diseases. The diagnosis can be made on the basis of two key criteria:

» The pain in the body has lasted for a minimum of three months and is present above and below the waist, and in the left and right sides of the body as well as the back and the front.

» There are 18 known “tender points” on the body. They are not normally painful unless a doctor familiar with FM applies slight pressure. At least 11 points must be sensitive to diagnose fibromyalgia.

The causes of fibromyalgia are not well understood and most likely involve a variety of factors such as:

- » Genetics and family history
- » Gender (it occurs more in women)
- » Infections
- » Physical or emotional trauma
- » Rheumatic disease

While fibromyalgia has no cure, its symptoms can be treated with medication and self care. Pain can be treated with acetaminophen, ibuprofen or other pain relievers. An antidepressant may be prescribed to help with anxiety, sleep disorders and pain management, while physical therapy can help reduce muscle pain. A healthy lifestyle that includes managing physical and mental stress, sufficient sleep, regular exercise and a balanced diet is always recommended.

If you have persistent, generalized pain and fatigue, see your doctor.

Why You Should Know CPR

Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) turns 50 this year! This life-saving technique that combines rhythmic chest compressions with rescue breaths was developed in 1960 to provide immediate emergency assistance to people who experience sudden cardiac arrest.

While CPR does not restart the heart, chest compressions help pump oxygenated blood through the heart and brain, which helps sustain life until professional medical help arrives. Keeping the heart and brain supplied with oxygen is vital to minimizing damage to these critical organs.

CPR is a skill that everyone should know because...



• Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of death in Canada, and 80% of cardiac arrests happen at

home, so chances are you’ll be first on the scene. Knowledge of CPR allows you to act as an effective first-responder in an emergency.

• The brain and other organs begin to die (due to lack of oxygen) four to six minutes after the heart stops beating. By administering CPR immediately, you can more than double a person’s chance of surviving sudden cardiac arrest.

While television depictions of CPR make it look easy, it’s a skill that needs to be properly executed in order to be effective. CPR techniques and processes have changed in recent years, and they also differ for adults, children and infants, so it’s important to be up to date and knowledgeable about all three.

If you’ve never learned CPR, take a course. The Canadian Red Cross and St. John’s Ambulance (among other organizations) offer CPR and first aid training courses. If you’ve learned CPR but are a little rusty, take a CPR refresher. Remember, knowledge of CPR could help you save a life.

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.
Henry Ford (1863-1947) American industrialist

Straight Talk with Your Doc

Despite what you may think, you can't fool your doctor. In fact, doctors know that patients often downplay their health concerns or conceal lifestyle choices. While minimizing how much you really smoke, drink or exercise, or downplaying physical symptoms may seem harmless, it can lead to a delay in diagnosis or a misdiagnosis and delay of proper treatment.

People don't tell their doctors the full story for a variety of reasons:

Being in denial – Many patients already know that what they are doing (e.g., smoking) is bad for them, but they don't wish to give it up.

Fear – Patients sometimes downplay or fail to mention symptoms for fear the doctor will actually find something. They also worry about receiving a lecture.

Embarrassment – Some patients feel uncomfortable discussing intimate issues like sexual dysfunction or mental health concerns.

Being a good patient – Some people minimize health concerns to appear to be a good patient.

Be honest with your doctor. There is nothing your doctor has not already seen or heard and you are



not going to be judged. Make notes and bring them to your appointment. Let your doctor know all the medications you are taking, including vitamins and herbal remedies. Tell the truth about how much you smoke, drink, eat or exercise, as this can be significant for treating certain health concerns. Finally, be clear about describing your symptoms, as these are often a doctor's best guide to determining a diagnosis and treatment.

Air Fresheners



Air fresheners that perfume our homes with sweet aromas are big business. Close to 75% of Canadians buy fragrant aerosol sprays, scented candles, scent-releasing solids and plug-in air fresheners, and while most of us like the smell, the potential health hazards are not so appealing. That's because many air-freshening products contain potentially harmful chemicals, including formaldehyde, phthalates, limonene, benzene and volatile organic compounds.

In addition to posing potential health risks for vulnerable populations such as unborn babies and young children (phthalates have been linked to hormonal abnormalities and reproductive problems), air fresheners are a source of indoor air pollution. People with asthma or chemical sensitivities are also at risk of reacting to these products.

To keep your home smelling fresh, keep it well ventilated by opening the windows, or invest in an air purifier with an activated carbon filter, commonly recommended for people who suffer from asthma.



Snoring and Sleep Apnea

It can start up like a lawnmower, appear in uneven bursts, or roll like ocean waves all night long. Snoring affects close to 30% of Canadians. Often the subject of humour, the health implications of snoring are no laughing matter.

Snoring occurs when the flow of breath vibrates the lining of the throat, which loosens as a person sleeps, narrowing the air passage (the narrower the air passage and the

faster the airflow, the louder the snore). If there is too much blockage, breathing can actually stop for 10 to 20 seconds. This is called sleep apnea, and it often leads to headaches, exhaustion, mood swings, increased accidents and depression. Over the long term, fluctuating oxygen levels can lead to hypertension and increase the chances of developing heart disease or stroke.

For some, the only indication of

loud snoring is frequent elbow jabs from an annoyed partner. However, there are signs if the snoring has become apnea. Be alert for daytime tiredness, dry mouth or a sore throat.

Your likelihood of snoring or suffering from sleep apnea may be determined by anatomy, such as a larger tongue or tonsils. However, smoking, obesity and alcohol consumption can also contribute to the problem.

A healthy weight and lifestyle can help reduce snoring, as can sleeping on your side or doing voice exercises that tighten the throat muscles.

If you suspect you or a loved one may have chronic apnea, consult your doctor. Your physician can refer you to a specialist, who, depending on the severity of the problem, may recommend laser or traditional surgery or a pressurized sleep mask (CPAP).

Laugh and the world laughs with you, snore and you sleep alone.

Anthony Burgess (1917-1993) English novelist and critic

Minimizing Neck Pain

Spending long hours seated at a computer keyboard can literally be a pain in the neck, but there are some simple things you can do to avoid this problem. For the most part, all that's required is a few simple adjustments to your posture and the layout of your work area.

The head weighs approximately 12 pounds (5.4 kilograms). When it's held in a forward position (away from its centre base above the shoulders) there's a three-fold increase in the amount of pressure exerted on the cervical (neck) vertebra. That's 36 lbs. (16 kg) of pressure being placed on that tiny column of bones in your neck. The muscles in this area must work hard to stabilize and support the head, and you can be sure they're putting in overtime if you're slouching while tapping away on the keyboard. To minimize tension in the neck and shoulders, try the following:

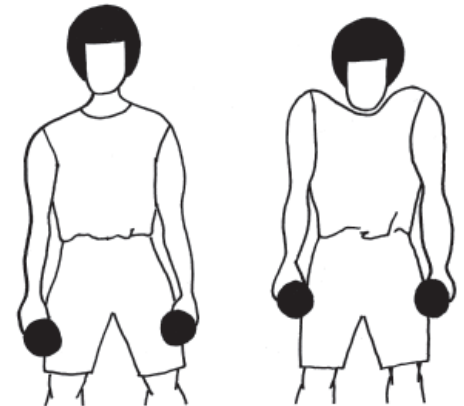
- Position your computer screen 18 to 25 inches (46 to 64 centimetres) away from your eyes and slightly below (about 15 degrees below) horizontal eye level to avoid raising and lowering your head from keyboard to screen.
- The back of your chair should be designed to offer support to the lower back, which will also keep you more conscious of your posture. Your feet should remain flat on the floor, or slightly elevated on a footrest.
- Position the keyboard at approximately waist height. The mouse should be close to and at the same height as the keyboard.
- Take several breaks to stretch your neck and shoulder muscles. Do a few stretches at your desk, or get up and stroll around the office.

Here are two simple exercises to strengthen and relax these key areas:

The Shrug:

Relax your arms at your sides while holding two light dumbbells in your hands. Raise your shoulders to your ears. Pause while tensing the muscles of your upper back. As you lower your shoulders, roll them backward, while still keeping the muscles tense. Relax them when you are back at the starting position. Repeat for three to four sets (groups) of 10 to 12 repetitions.

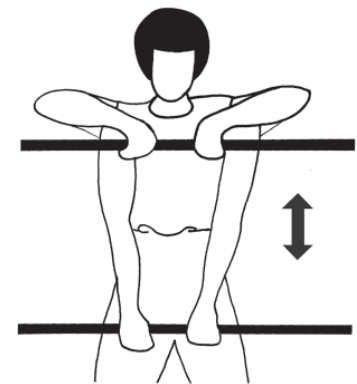
Workplace Tip: The shrug (without the weights) is also a relaxing tension-reliever. While working at your computer, take frequent breaks to "shrug" away the tension.



The Shrug

The Upright Row:

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and knees relaxed. Hold a barbell or dumbbells with arms hanging straight down in front of your body. Palms face inward. Space your hands about 8 in. (20 cm) apart, which is best for more focus on the neck and upper back (when hands are wider apart, this becomes mostly an exercise for the shoulders). Slowly "row" the weight to your chin, bending your elbows to rise higher than your hands and shoulders. Try raising your elbows as high as possible. Pause when your hands are at collarbone height, and then slowly lower to starting position. Repeat for about three to four sets (groups) of 10 to 12 repetitions. Keep the weight close to your body as you lift and lower.



The Upright Row

Every Move You Make



Any activity that gets you moving is good for you. Even doing everyday household chores burns calories plus gets your body up and engaged in a variety of movements.

Check out the calorie burn (per hour) of these 10 common home-based activities

(based on a body weight of 150 pounds/68 kilograms):

1. General house cleaning	246
2. Cooking or food preparation	176
3. Gardening	352
4. Mowing the lawn	387
5. Clearing the table and washing dishes	170
6. Raking the yard	281
7. Sweeping floors	224
8. Walking while holding an infant	246
9. Vacuuming	238
10. Ironing	156

It's easier to go down a hill than up it, but the view is much better at the top.

Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) Clergyman and social reformer

Fat Burning for the Unfit



It's well known that exercising at a high intensity burns the most calories and therefore burns more fat. We also know that people who are physically fit kick into fat-burning mode faster and burn more fat than people who are less fit. Unfortunately, for those who are not physically fit, high-intensity workouts are impossible to sustain for any length of time, with fatigue setting in long before larger amounts of calories and fat can be burned.

Happily, there's hope for less physically fit people seeking to increase their fat-burning capacity, as it's been found that longer, less-intense activity does eventually help reduce body fat. From a practical perspective, one of the best ways to get the body to burn more fat is through interval training, which involves periods of intense exercise broken up by periods of rest. Interval training not only allows you to burn more fat while you exercise, it also trains your body to become more efficient at burning fat all the time.

Here's an example of a simple interval-training workout:

Warm up for three to five minutes by doing your chosen activity at a lower intensity (e.g., brisk walking or cycling on an exercise bike).

Increase the intensity of your activity for 30 seconds. This can be a sprint (if you are brisk walking) or you can increase the tension and speed on your exercise bike. Work hard enough to increase your heart rate to where talking

becomes an effort. The Perceived Exertion method (see sidebar) is an excellent guide.

Lower the intensity of your activity for one to two minutes to an easy pace until your heart rate slows enough to be able to talk easily.

Repeat this cycle of 30-second "sprints" and one- to two-minute recovery periods eight to 12 times.

You can adjust your workout in a variety of ways as you become more fit: decrease your recovery time, increase your sprint time, repeat the cycle more often, go faster, use an incline, add resistance or try another activity.

Perceived Exertion Scale

The **Perceived Exertion Scale** provides a simple way to identify your level of physical effort while exercising. For most workouts, try to achieve a level 5-6. For those doing interval training, the recovery period should be around level 4-5 and the high-intensity "sprint" at level 7-8. **Working at level 9 or 10 isn't recommended for anyone – even the very fit.** For longer workouts, like hikes or long bike rides, a level 5 or lower is recommended.



- Level 1:** You are sitting on the couch, channel surfing
- Level 2:** You are comfortable and could maintain this pace all day long
- Level 3:** Still comfortable, but breathing a bit harder
- Level 4:** Sweating a little, but you feel good and can carry on a conversation effortlessly
- Level 5:** You are just above comfortable – sweating more, but you can still talk easily
- Level 6:** You can still talk, but you are slightly breathless
- Level 7:** Really sweating and talking has become a real effort
- Level 8:** Can grunt in reply to a question. Can keep at this pace for a short time only
- Level 9:** Feel like you are going to die
- Level 10:** You are dead.

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