

Activity Snacking

How to move more and get more out of it



“You need to get more exercise.” Chances are you’ve heard that from your doctor, a well-meaning friend or family member, or your inner critic. And maybe you’ve thought, “No kidding? Thanks for the generally unhelpful and frustrating advice!”

Then, maybe you stormed out for a brisk walk or did a little anger dance to blow off steam. In which case, great job, you just exercised! Time for a reward cookie.

Just kidding. About the cookie, not about you having just exercised. Recent research shows that even short bursts of activity can help with our fitness and health.

What if the key to “getting more exercise” is to sneak more of these movement moments into our day?

Movement Matters

It’s well-documented that physical activity is critical to overall health and wellbeing. Thanks to wearable devices and evolving science, we’re constantly gaining even deeper understanding. For instance, we’re learning that different kinds of exercise and activity carry different benefits:

- ➔ Getting as few as **2,300** steps per day has been shown to reduce the risk of dying from cardiovascular disease. – *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*
- ➔ People who get at least **150** minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per week have nearly half the healthcare utilization compared to those who don’t. – *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*
- ➔ As little as **4 ½** minutes of vigorous daily activity can lower rates of cancer by more than **30%**. – *Journal of the American Medical Association*

From these studies and others like them, we’re learning that a varied and balanced exercise menu—much like a balanced diet—is key to optimizing health and wellbeing.

Like Food Groups, Only for Exercise

To get a well-balanced exercise diet, it can be helpful to group movement into three categories.



FUNCTIONAL

Essential movement for mobility and balance like walking, stretching, reaching, and bending.



FITNESS

Athletic movement for strength, stamina, and coordination like weightlifting, jogging, resistance/endurance training, or practicing sports skills.



FUN

Joyful movement for a mood boost or building social connections like dancing, playing a sport, taking a fitness class, or other shared physical activities.

Making Snackactivities Work for You

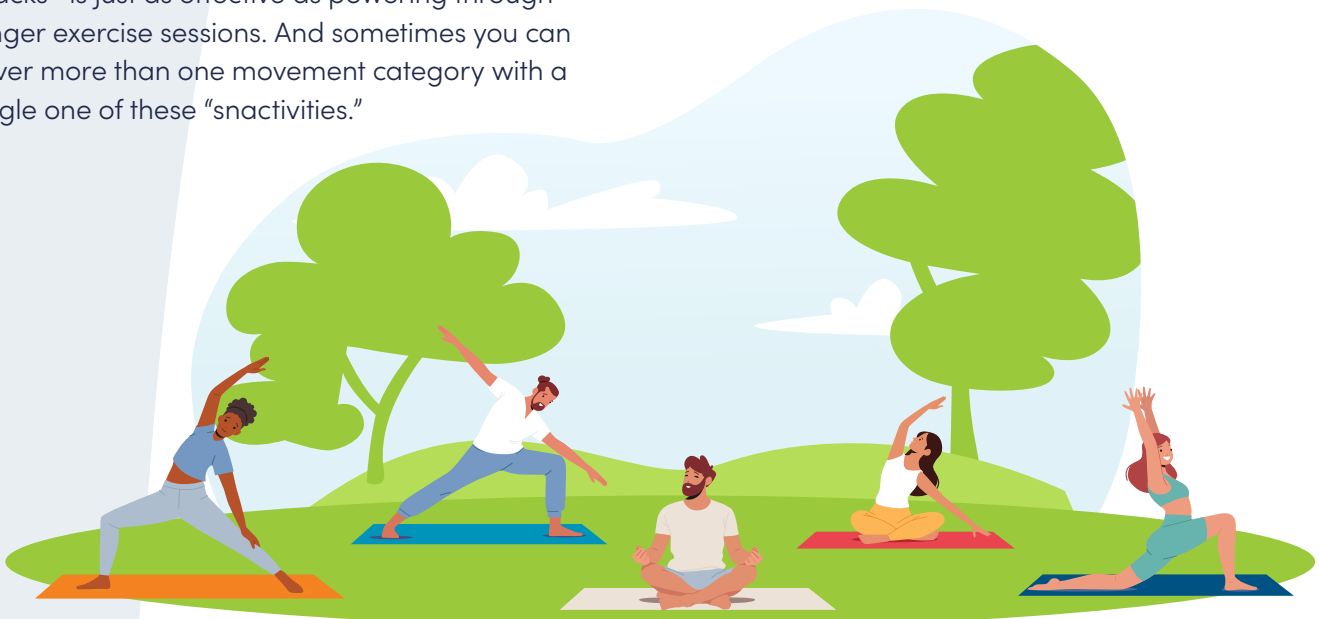
Here are some examples of accessible activity snacks and the categories they cover:

Snactivity	Category
A 2-minute walk	Functional
10 cross-body toe-touches (sitting or standing)	Functional, Fitness
10 pushups against a wall or desk (or floor pushups if you can)	Fitness
A jog up and down a flight of stairs	Fitness
5 sets of crane stretches, alternating between standing on your left and right foot	Functional, Fitness
20 chair squats	Fitness, Functional
Doing any of the above with an activity buddy or colleague	Fun

Now, you may be thinking, “Ugh! It’s hard enough to find time to exercise at all without worrying about different types!” Don’t worry. You don’t need to cram in big epic sessions under each category.

Science shows that meeting movement requirements through frequent, short, bursts of effort—or activity snacks—is just as effective as powering through longer exercise sessions. And sometimes you can cover more than one movement category with a single one of these “snactivities.”

The trick is to work in as many one to two-minute snactivities as you can every day—ideally one every 30 – 45 minutes. Then, if you’d like, you can supplement with a couple of longer activities each week for even greater benefits.





Some final tips:



Use the longer sessions to work in more fitness intensity (brisk long-distance walk, a weightlifting session) and more fun (an aerobics or dance class, a pickleball game, a softball league.)



Try for consistency. It can be hard to fit a rigid schedule around work responsibilities, so be flexible, focusing less on the exact timing and more on the goal of fitting in 8 – 10 snackivities at some point throughout the day, every day.



Explore new options matched to your likes and your level of fitness and mobility by searching online video platforms for different bodyweight exercises, stretches, and short workout routines. There's something out there for everyone, and it can be part of the fun to devise new snackivities based on what you find.



Use [Concern's Digital Platform](#) to visit eM Life for fitness-focused on-demand programs like *Getting Active* for a fitness/fun boost, or the *7 Day Guide to Mindful Movement* to meet your functional and fitness activity needs.



ONE FINAL TIP:

Start slowly with exercises or activities you enjoy and build from there. The more you like it, the more likely you are to stick with it!

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