

10 minutes to exercise? Take a walk!

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If you only have 10 minutes to exercise, make them simple and effective – go for a walk! You’ll experience a wide-range of benefits from putting on your walking shoes and heading outside!



Sometimes, your calendar clears up for a ten minute block. Maybe a meeting ends early, or a client texts that she is running late. Maybe you hit every green light on the way to school and you are there 10 minutes before the bell rings for pick-up. When you find those ten minutes, the best thing you can do with them is go for a walk!

Truly, walking is amazing exercise. In an overscheduled, overcomplicated world, it can be hard to believe that something as simple and old-fashioned as a walk around the block will do you good, but it will.

Empirical research continues to pile up, showing more and more benefits of a walk. For instance, research has found that walking regularly can improve your psychological health, help you lose weight, prevent chronic health conditions like high cholesterol and high blood pressure, reduce your risk of a stroke, even make your bowels more regular and help prevent against varicose veins! Other research has found that walking outside yields even more benefits than walking on a treadmill, probably through a combination of fresh air and sunlight exposure. Walking outside in a green space like a park or trail has been found most effective for promoting psychological health.

More recent research shows that a brief walk can even be more effective than a longer one! For instance, research at George Washington University found that a 15-minute walk after each meal was more effective in controlling blood sugar than one longer, 45-minute walk. In another study from Arizona State University, researchers found that three 10-minute walks were better at controlling blood pressure than one 30-minute walk. One large-scale, longitudinal study of older adults found that walking just 4 blocks per day improved health over those who were not active.

Truly – if you do only one exercise, only one thing for your self-care – you should go for a walk. It’s free (except for a pair of comfortable shoes), you can do it anywhere, you can do it with anyone – and the health benefits are enormous, and range the full spectrum of both physical and psychological health. Even doing a minimal amount of walking will make you healthier. And you can continue to do it for as long as you live, and experience benefits no matter how old you are. If you build walking into your life as a regular routine now, you can still be doing it as a regular health-promoting routine when you have grandchildren to take out for a walk. I promise! Just ask my 70-year-old mom who has been walking for exercise since she became a working mom, almost 40 years ago!

It’s often easier to find several brief blocks on your schedule than one longer block. If you put those blocks together towards your health with a walk, you can experience substantial boosts in both your physical and psychological well-being. Make at least one of those walks a family affair – for instance, a family stroll around the block after dinner (and leave the phones turned off so that you actually talk), and you’ll be increasing your quality time together, while teaching your children good health habits that they can sustain across their lifespans!

Kimberlee Bethany Bonura, PhD, is #TheFitEnoughMom. Dr. Bonura is an exercise scientist, an Experienced-Registered Yoga Teacher with the Yoga Alliance, a certified personal trainer, and a certified group fitness instructor, and a working mom of two. Her mission is to help everyone realize that fitness can be fun and accessible – no stress, no guilt, and definitely no pain!