

**Try these lifestyle ideas?**

**There are many ways that you, no matter how busy you are, can build physical activity into your lives.** Being physically active is easier than you think, especially if you make activity part of your daily routine and lifestyle. In this article I am going to share with you some tips and ideas that I provide to my clients to help them become more active. From my time working as a personal trainer, I have encountered three distinct groups that approach me with ideas for making their lifestyle more active:

1. Busy parents and families;
2. Workers; and
3. Older people

Aim to do activities that you like and that fit easily into your daily routine. Get active with friends, family and work colleagues to maintain enjoyment, motivation and consistency. Crucially, think outside the box, there are numerous ways other than going to the gym that you can get active, for instance, playing with the children in the park, doing hard gardening and walking to work. The following are just some of the ideas that you can embrace to make your lifestyle more active.

**Busy Parents and Families**

* You are more likely to be successful if you do your exercise at the same time and on the same days each week. For instance, a 30 minute run on a Tuesday and Thursday at 6pm.
* Split your activity up throughout the day. You could do two 10 minute workouts per day 3 times per week. For instance, 10 minutes at 7am and 7pm on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
* Aim to walk or cycle any journeys that are under 1 mile e.g. to the shop, to the hairdressers, to a friends.
* Get active with your children. For instance, walk them to and from school, run around in the park, go for swimming lessons or go dancing.
* Set up an exercise group with other parents and families. For instance, you can go running, walking, pushing your buggies, swimming.
* When doing house work, turn it into a workout (though still doing a good job!!). For instance, when cleaning the house, gardening or decorating work up a sweat. Get the children to help you and make it fun.
* Exercising at home is great because you can easily to fit around your daily routine and you do not need much time or equipment. For instance, you can do an exercise DVD or a run up and down the stairs.
* Utilise your child’s interest in computer games and get active by having fun and competitions on the Wii console.
* Getting involved in coaching a local sport team will be fun, worthwhile and good exercise. Encourage your children to join a sports team for the exercise, for instance playing rugby on a Sunday and training on a Tuesday night.
* Try to incorporate exercise into your daily commute to work e.g. run, cycle or walk the full journey, or get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way. Do your exercise as part of the journey you would be making anyway.
* Instead of watching TV, find fun activities to do that burn off calories with your children and with friends. For instance, playing hide and seek, trampolining, exploring woods and riding bikes.
* Set time aside each week to go on a family walk, bike ride or swim, for instance every Sunday morning. Walking, cycling and swimming are fun and easy ways for children and you to get active. Doing a treasure hunt walk or even just messing about in a swimming pool is great fun and exercise.
* As a family, incorporating small activity changes into your lifestyle makes a massive difference. For instance, always walk up and down the stairs rather than taking the lift, park at the furthest away parking space at the supermarket for the extra walk and walk to and from the local shop.

**Workers**

* As part of your commute to work you could cycle or walk part, if not all, of your journey. If you cannot do the full journey, you could get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way, or if you car share walk part of the journey and then get a lift.
* If you do drive to work, try and find somewhere suitable to park that is a bit further away from your work than you usually park and walk.
* At work, walk up and down the stairs rather than using the lift or escalators, or at least get out of the lift a few floors lower and walk up the stairs for the remainder. If you do use the escalators walk up them rather than stand still.
* Whilst talking on the telephone stand or walk rather than sit and put your files away from your desk, for instance on the top shelf, so that you have to stand up to get them.
* Walk to a colleague’s desk, rather than emailing or ringing them, to discuss work. Aim to get up and walk around your workplace every hour to stretch your legs, for instance go for a drink at the water machine.
* Have your lunch away from desk and work e.g. walk to a local bench, to your car or at least the work canteen (if you have one). Do not take your lunch and instead walk to and from the local chop/café to buy a nutritious meal.
* Exercise before, during or after work. For instance, go for a brisk walk during your lunch break or as soon as work finishes, either on your own or with colleagues or swimming if there is a nearby pool. If your workplace has a gym (or one nearby) or a room with space in you could do a quick fire circuit.
* Set up a works sport game to encourage activity, fun and team work, for instance five-a-side football or dodgeball game every Friday after work.

**Older adults**

* Be active around the house, for instance walking while you're on the phone and dancing whilst cooking can help to keep you active and mobile.
* Voluntary work can be a great way to become active, make friends and make a difference, for instance cleaning the local park and planting trees.
* Power walking is a great way to increase your activity levels and it is kind to your joints. Find a friend to walk with or join a walking group for some extra motivation, variety and enjoyment.
* Join an exercise and social group where you can play a variety of sports and games, for instance, badminton, table tennis and swimming on a Tuesday and Friday morning. They are great for exercise, making friends and having fun.
* You can get a great workout from gardening and house work, which involves pushing, bending, carrying, climbing and squatting (though do not injure yourself). Get friends and family to help you.
* Take up cycling and swimming. They provide a good workout and by mixing them up it maintains motivation. Working out in water is perfect for older adults because water reduces stress on the body's joints.
* If you travel on the bus you could get off one stop early and walk the remainder of the way to your final destination to burn off extra calories.
* You can perform mobility exercises whilst sat in your chair, for instance knee bends and shoulder presses. This is great for maintaining movement.
* Embrace modern technology and get active by having fun on a Wii computer. You can play lots of games that involve moving, bending and squatting.
* Get a dog. This will encourage you to take it for long walks and to get active and play by throwing a ball, which is great exercise and fun.

There are many more ways that you can become more active that I would be delighted to share and discuss with you. Should you require any help, advice or information please do not hesitate to contact me.

“Together, we’ll achieve your goals”

Matt Swierzynski

E: matt@mattswaz.co.uk

M: 07936654876

W: www.mattswaz.co.uk