

EXERCISE LESS TO HABITUATE SUCCESS?

A 'Fit by Bit' Approach to Physical Activity

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Successful fitness prescription is not about painting all clients with the same 'at least 3 times per week, strength, cardio, flexibility' routine. New exercisers may need to approach their exercise routine very conservatively at first – to experience success with activities they actually make the time to do. Once they experience success (and for many it will be a first) they will create time for *more* exercise.

Instill 'Competence'

Exercise success also depends upon choosing activities that your client will enjoy, and execute with relative ease. Simplicity breeds competence, at least in the beginning. Get creative with at-home, or outdoor activity options that get your clients moving instead of the standard weight room and aerobics classes?

Start with SIMPLE

Longevity in exercise is dependent upon successful habit forming, and habits are best nurtured in an environment of simplicity. Help your clients to habituate exercise, and save your complex programs for a few months down the road. Simplicity will increase the likelihood of consistency. New exercisers must first experience success, and then with the help of a compassionate fitness leader, they'll begin to add more time, and variety to their program. It doesn't get much simpler than the 10 'sneak' exercises listed below. Share them with your clients and empower them toward positive changes.

Promote a 'Fit by Bit' Approach

Exercise doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing proposition to deliver good results. BY *sneaking* just a minute here and five minutes there, your clients can end the week with calorie burning that makes a difference. The key to 'sneak exercise' is to create a HABIT around increasing activity in creative ways that are built in to the day. We're committed to certain 'to do's' every day – laundry, grocery shopping, banking, house cleaning, even meetings and meals – so why not sneak in a few extra effort exercises along the way? Calorie burning doesn't always have to be in the form of structured exercise to make a positive impact, and whether your clients use these sneak exercises as starting points or add them into their week as a part of your program, these sneak exercises will make a difference. When it comes to activity and calorie burning an individual should aim to do *more than what is normal for them*, and every effort adds up!

Here are 5 fun ways to get 'Fit by Bit'. You won't have to spend a dime or find much more time!

- 1. Practice proper POSTURE** – By making an effort to stand "tall and proud" you contract dozens of muscles from your legs up to your neck. Muscle contraction burns calories and builds muscle. Whether you're ironing, doing dishes, or standing in a line-up at the bank concentrate on keeping a solid foot stance, a slight bend in your knees,

an open chest (i.e. standing tall, not slouched), with shoulders depressed and head up. Not only does proper posture provide exercise but it helps you *feel* better too – more confident and poised.

2. LEG it to Laundry – Whether you're folding clothes, ironing them, or waiting for the rinse cycle, *captive time* is ideal for adding in some lovely leg work. Stand and perform 10-15 **plié squats** (think ballerina). Place heels just beyond shoulder width with toes rotated out to 45°. As you drop into your squat keep your knees in line with your toes and make sure head, shoulders, and hips 'stack up' as you drop down. Squeeze your butt as you stand tall.

3. BACK for basics – Imagine you're squeezing a pencil between your shoulder blades and you have to hold the muscles tight so the pencil doesn't fall. It doesn't take long before the muscles in your **back** start to fatigue does it? Any time you re-align your posture, sit or stand a bit taller, and get away from a slumped posture, you're exercising your back and core muscles.

4. PUSH UP bra-vo! – Did you know that five pushups works over seven different muscles and burns up to 10 calories? Not only do pushups target **chest** muscles, but they shape shoulders and tighten core muscles too. If you don't want to "get down" and gimme five, why not place hands on the edge of your desk or the back of your couch? Step back far enough so your body is at about a 45 degree angle from the floor, then lower your body.

5. Be a BICEPS bagger – The next time you're carrying your grocery or shopping bags to your car, perform a series of **biceps** curls as you do. Keep your elbows at your sides and palms up as you hold the handles. Curl your groceries toward your shoulders. Lower and repeat until you get to your car or until your biceps tire out. Need more of a challenge? Park further away from the store's entrance.

Michelle has more tips she can e-mail you. Contact information is listed below.

For more ways to sneak exercise into your day, visit Jumpsite's Calorie Calculator at <http://www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner/jumpsite/calculat.htm>. Enter your body weight and the duration of your exercise and it'll display a list of hundreds of activities and how many calories you've burned in that time. Find your activity (or a reasonable facsimile) and record your success.

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*As a recognized life balance strategist and fitness motivation expert Michelle motivates her audiences to take realistic steps toward more of the things we all want – achievable **life balance**, time for **fitness**, heightened **stress 'defense'**, and the energy and confidence they bring! She has built her career in the fitness industry since 1990, as a personal trainer and educator, and expands that practical experience into motivational speaking and consulting. Her lively sessions have entertained hundreds of audiences across Canada and the U.S.*