



Fit a workout into the workday

LUNCH ON THE RUN

Take a break and get fit at lunchtime. Research shows lunch break exercise helps alleviate stress and boost energy. Try jogging, walking, lifting weights, swimming, or cycling and make a midday workout a permanent, healthy routine.

Research shows people who schedule time for a workout in the morning or at lunch are more likely to stick with the program because it becomes part of their daily routine. People who plan exercise around their daily obligations often put it off until it is too late.

A growing number of employers offer extended lunch breaks in return for earlier starting or later finishing times. Workers who are restricted to a one-hour lunch break will find 30 minutes of exercise can go a long way toward improving fitness. Workers who work out generally take fewer sick days, have more energy, and higher on the job morale. Some forward thinking companies offer employees reduced gym membership fees or on-site fitness facilities.

The urge to overeat during the workday can be heightened by stress and the temptation of high-fat fast food. Lunchtime exercise acts as an appetite suppressant, or at least a distraction from eating. Even a moderate workout will raise the metabolism, this goes on after the workout to boost energy levels, and helps create a positive self-image.

People who exercise during their lunch break may need a midmorning snack. Active people tend to get hungry about every three to four hours. Eating frequent small meals helps keep the metabolism charged and staves off junk food cravings. Experts recommend eating 400 to 1600 kilojoules (100 to 400 calories) an hour or two before a workout.

Suggested snacks include breakfast bars, a slice of whole-grain toast topped with healthy spread or fruit, a half-cup of mixed dried fruit, or instant oatmeal. Refuel after a workout with easy-to-eat foods. Yogurt, dried or fresh fruit, nuts, raw vegetables, cereal bars, high-fibre biscuits, soup, sandwiches, or wraps filled with lean meat, fish, and salad are the best options.

Takeaway tips

Keep a supply of easy meals and ingredients in the freezer and pantry. These might include pizza bases, pasta sauces, fresh vegetables, lean meats, and prepared lentils. This makes it easy to prepare a nutritious meal.



Better takeaway options can include plain hamburgers with lots of salad (leave out the bacon, fried onion, and fried egg). Enjoy a small portion of gourmet style pizza with white cheese, vegetable, or seafood toppings on a thin crust.



Jacket potatoes with creamed corn, baked beans, or salad toppings are tasty and filling. Sandwiches with lean meat, vegetables, salad, grilled fish with salad, pasta with tomato based sauce, sushi, or Vietnamese rolls are a good choice.

Order small portions of foods that are high in fat and salt. These include chips, fried chicken, fatty meats, cheese, bacon, and fried onions. Ask for extra servings of salad and vegetables. Opt for fries cooked in healthier oils. Good oils include olive, canola, sunflower, and soybean.

Leave out the chips and soft drink, choose a side salad, corn cob, bread roll, fruit, yoghurt, or bottled water. Light, lean, or reduced fat meals are generally a better choice. Choose grilled not fried foods. Buy skin-free marinated chicken or remove the skin from roast or fried chicken to reduce the fat content. Ask for sauce on the side and use very little.

