



## GET ACTIVE!

*By Chelsea Page-Phillips, Wellness Coach and Behaviour Change Specialist*

**'If exercise could be packaged in a pill, it would be the single most widely prescribed and beneficial medicine in the nation.'** Robert N. Butler, M.D National Institute on Aging

For many of us, we imagine that being 'fit' means being able to run a 5k without stopping, doing 100 burpees, or squatting the equivalent of our bodyweight.

**The truth is**, there isn't a singular definition of fitness, but common definitions include the condition of being physically fit and healthy; and the quality of being able to fulfil a particular role or task.

### **ONE DEFINITION OF FITNESS THAT WE FREQUENTLY OVERLOOK IS LONGEVITY.**

Health, physical condition, and even the capacity to carry out tasks necessary for long-term life are all synonymous with fitness. The tasks and activities we must perform to survive have significantly decreased because of our modern and higher tech environment. Food is delivered at the touch of a button and jobs require less physical demand.

There is scientific evidence to prove even modest amounts of regular physical activity can help in the prevention and management of some of the most common chronic illnesses we face - high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and even some cancers.

### **SO, WHAT'S THE RIGHT AMOUNT?**

According to the NHS Choices (1), people aged 19-64 should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, such as cycling or fast walking every week, and strength exercises (such as lifting weights) on two or more days a week that work all the major muscles (don't skip leg day!)



## A LITTLE BIT BEATS NONE AT ALL

The most common response for not exercising is 'I don't have the time' so here are my top suggestions to break down 30 minutes a day into small bitesize chunks to get you started.



Set your alarm **20 minutes** earlier in the morning and go for a 15-minute brisk walk around the block



Back-to-back meetings? Schedule just **10 minutes** in your calendar to walk around the office car park (10 minutes out of a 7-hour day is just 2.4% if you like maths)



Waiting for your favourite programme to start? Set a timer for **5 minutes**, put on some music and dance or pace around the room to the beat.

## TAKE THE NEAT APPROACH

NEAT or **non-exercise activity thermogenesis** is an acronym to describe the energy expended from everything we do that excludes sleeping, eating, or planned exercise. It ranges from simple things such as walking to the shop instead of using the car, taking the stairs, household chores, and even fidgeting. One of the simplest ways to measure NEAT is through our steps, using devices such as fitness watches or a pedometer. A great daily target to aim for is 7,000 as a starting point. This is where we begin to see all those great health benefits! Then, once you have **consistently** achieved **7,000**, go for **10,000** a day!

*American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) investigators reviewed the current scientific research, examining the association between daily step counts and health, and found those who accumulated more steps per day were less likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes and experience premature mortality" (2)*

## FINAL THOUGHT

Increasing physical activity shouldn't be an all-or-nothing task - this kind of thinking simply puts up more barriers and contributes to sedentary behaviours. Making the time and creating action, no matter what form, all link to improving your health and fitness. There aren't any quick fixes or shortcuts.

My best advice? Change the way you think about fitness, find an activity you enjoy and stick with it consistently. This truly is the best and most effective way to get started.

If this resonates with you and you want to do what's best for your health, then give one of our Wellness Coaches a shout: [pt@healthoutfit.co.uk](mailto:pt@healthoutfit.co.uk).