Designed to Move

Overview:

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Human beings are designed to move and be active. Our bodies evolved to meet the demands of human existence. And yet, in many modern societies, physical inactivity is so deeply entrenched that it has become the norm for so many. According to Statistics Canada, Canadian adults aged 18 to 79 spend an average of nearly 10 waking hours per day sedentary (not including sleep). No longer does the average person grow their own food, and work 12 hours of manual labor. Instead, most Canadians drive to work, sit in an office chair all day, and relax around the television in the evening. We truly are a sedentary culture.

According to the Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) released by Statistics Canada, only 15 percent of adults achieve the minimum level of physical activity each day.

Move to Increase Energy

If your day begins early in the morning and you then go to work or immerse yourself in family activities, and your day may not end until after 10:00 PM, you must maintain a high level of energy to keep up with the pace. Today, we live in a fast paced society where we work long hours, volunteer, spend time with family and friends, and then repeat the cycle again and again. Unfortunately, this cycle is not getting any easier as we age. Therefore, it is essential we become proficient at finding healthy ways to manage our energy in sustainable ways. In order to feel at your best, have more energy and even live longer, movement is a critical part of the solution for enhancing the quality of your life!

People who don't create space for physical activity in their lives often cite lack of time or energy as a reason for not exercising. What these individuals may fail to realize is that physical activity actually *gives you more energy* and makes you *more productive*. Physical activity stimulates the brain, releasing feel good chemicals (called endorphins), which enhance energy levels. Don't believe me; let's look at Sarah, a successful entrepreneur who incorporates small amounts of movements into her workday.

Every morning Sarah arrives at the office at 9:00 AM. Despite her 45-minute commute to work, Sarah still manages to walk 40 minutes each morning before work. Sarah walks the dog for 20 minutes in the morning before driving to work. Then at approximately 8:30 AM Sarah parks her car 20 minutes away from her office, and then walks the remainder of the distance. By 8:50 AM Sarah has already walked a total distance of 4 KM and accumulated over 5,000 steps. This is half the number of steps Sarah's doctor recommends! Sarah's activity doesn't stop there. In fact, it carries into her lunch hour, just when she is starting to feel tired. At 12:00 PM Sarah breaks for lunch at a local coffee shop, which is 10-minute walk away. The fresh air and movement is just what Sarah needs after sitting in meetings all morning. This lunchtime walk recharges her batteries and gives her the physical and mental boost to get through the remainder of her day. After a busy day at the office and a 20-minute walk to her car, Sarah arrives home at 6:00 PM, just in time to sit down to a family dinner. To Sarah this is just another day at the office! So what are the health benefits you can expect to receive by simply incorporating small amounts of physical activity into your day? Let's look at some of the benefits Sarah's receiving. Keep in mind; Sarah's routine doesn't include long hours at the gym. She simply incorporates small bursts of movement into her daily routine.

Benefits of a Physically Active Lifestyle

Exercise Boosts Energy. Regular physical activity improves muscular strength and boosts your endurance. Exercise and physical activity deliver oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and help your cardiovascular system work more efficiently. When your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you have more energy to spend on other tasks.

Sharp Mind, Focus and Management of Emotions. Multiple studies have confirmed that regular exercise is one of the best things you can do for your mind. Regular exercise improves brain function, making you more productive at work and better able to communicate your thoughts and feelings.

Improved Mood and Mindset. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association research has shown that physical activity appears as effective as psychotherapy for treating mild to moderate depression. Thanks to chemicals released in the brain during exercise (endorphins), feelings of depression, anxiety, stress and anger are diminished during movement. Your work colleagues and family members will love spending time with you, as your perspective on life will positively be enhanced.

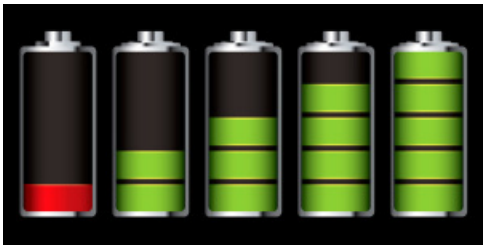
Maintain Better Health. Regular exercise strengthens the immune system. The stronger your immune system, the less often you'll get sick. This means you can spend more time doing the things you enjoy and less time in bed or dragging yourself through the day.

Sleep Deeper. People who exercise regularly fall asleep faster and wake up less often during the night than people who are sedentary. Getting a good night sleep is critical for managing your energy levels. People who sleep a quality 8-9 hours per night have more energy, and are more productive during the day.

Movement Can Be Fun. Exercise and short bursts of movement can be a fun. They give you a chance to unwind, enjoy the outdoors or simply engage in activities you enjoy. Physical activity can also help you connect with family or friends in a fun social setting. So, take a dance class, hit the hiking trails or join a soccer team. Or like Sarah, take up walking before, during, and after work. Find a physical activity you enjoy, and you'll never consider it a chore. If you get bored, don't be afraid to try something new.

Enjoy Life More. Life is much more enjoyable when you're healthy. Not only will you look better and feel better, but also you will be more productive in everything you do.

According to **Health Canada** physical activity improves health and wellbeing. It reduces stress, strengthens the heart and lungs, increases energy levels, helps you maintain and achieve a healthy body weight and it improves your outlook on life.



Physical Activity and Adequate Rest recharges your batteries

What are the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle?

According to the World Health Organization, inactivity is responsible for a magnitude of diseases, negative signs and symptoms of ill health and even deaths. With more of us spending the majority of our workday sitting down being inactive, these are some great reasons to get moving.

Anxiety. Just as exercise raises levels of endorphins (feel-good hormones) in the body – creating a sense of euphoria and relaxation – a lack of exercise can lead to feelings of anxiety. It's not purely a physiological effect, but also has an emotional root, as not exercising can leave us feeling unfit and anxious.

Diabetes. Being sedentary can lead to excessive weight gain. Having excess weight and being sedentary can result in the development of diabetes. Reduce your risk by keeping active and staying healthy.

Colon Cancer and High Blood Pressure. Being inactive reduces the action of all the major organs, from the brain to the circulatory system and the digestive tract. Therefore, when the bowel becomes sluggish, we are more predisposed to developing cancer of the colon.

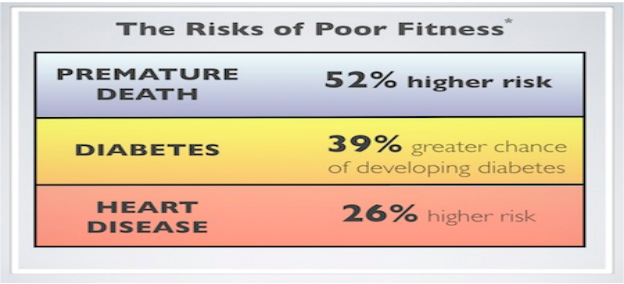
Improved Cardiovascular System. Regular exercise strengthens our heart and entire cardiovascular system. This good stress in turn makes our heart more efficient at delivering blood throughout our body. However, when we are sedentary, and overweigh our heart must work harder, therefore increasing our blood pressure.

Obesity. Sitting down for long periods throughout the day encourages weight gain. Humans were designed and evolved over time to move, not sit in an office chair all day. For thousands of years our ancestors included physical movement into every aspect of their lives. Gathering food, building shelter, and travel are just a few ways they kept active. The bottom line is quite simple. Sedentary lifestyles can lead to obesity which carries its own health risks, including heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension just to name a few.

Osteoporosis. Also known as brittle-bone disease, this preventable condition occurs more often in people who don't exercise. Bone density is improved by regular weight-bearing exercise. Therefore, people who are sedentary and don't engage in regular walking, swimming etc. and/or weight-bearing exercise are more vulnerable to broken bones and bone infections.

Prolonged Depression. Numerous studies have shown that exercise can be very effective at combating depression. In some cases exercise has proven to be even more effective than medications.

If all Canadians were sufficiently physically active, the savings to the health care system for heart disease alone would be $776 million a year. (CLFRI, 1994 – Being Active Saves Heart Disease Costs)



Changing for the Better: "How to" stick to your MOVEMENT program

Each year many Canadians follow a predictable and unfortunate pattern. On January 1, they swear off their poor eating habits, purchase a gym membership, and then revert to their old ways 6 weeks later. In fact, more than 80% of New Year's resolutions fail, and for those dieters, one-third actually gains additional weight. Why does this happen and why do our wonderful intensions fail? The answer may be simpler then you think!

An old Chinese proverb says, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time to plant a tree is today." If we apply this same proverb to MOVEMENT, the following statement is true. The best time to start MOVING was 20 years ago. The second best time to start MOVING is *today!*

Ultimately, we cannot change the past. Nothing can be done to alter decisions made yesterday or earlier in our life. We must live with our decisions and learn from the choices we have made.

But here is some great news! Though! While the past is behind us, the future *is ours*. As Moses Coady stated, "we are the masters of our destiny and have the ability to shape the future." If you have been inactive your entire life, or recently neglected your own personal health, do not dwell. Instead, learn from the past and look to your bright future ahead. Let's take a look at how you can have an exercise program and change for success.

Seek Out Activities You Enjoy. The key to sticking with an exercise routine is finding something you enjoy. If you enjoy it, you'll do it without thinking, and make it part of your daily routine. Make time to experiment with various types of movements. Just like when trying a new food, sometimes we try things we dislike. The same rules apply for movement. Sometimes the activity just doesn't feel right. Try walking, running, swimming, biking, dancing, weight training, yoga, or take part in any fitness class offered at your local gym. Remember, all worthwhile things in life take time, finding a movement to suit your needs is no different.

Value Movement and Make it a Priority. Movement makes us resilient in virtually all aspects of our lives. Healthy people can better deal with life's challenges and handle the hectic demands of work, family, and relationships. What most people don't realize is the connection between movement, productivity, and health. Yes, movement takes time, and it can help makes you better in various aspect of your life. The key is to make movement a priority and schedule it into your daily planner. When your health becomes a priority, you'll see every aspects of your life improve. If you still don't think you have enough time consider a statement made by former US present John F. Kennedy, "physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity." If the man in the Whitehouse was able to make time for this daily pilgrimage, you certainly should. Take some time and schedule regular movement opportunities into your schedule today.

Set Goals That Set You Up For Success. Setting realistic goals and expectations is important. If you've recently neglected your health and been sedentary for a number of years, committing yourself to a 7-day workout routine, is just asking for failure. Start slow and set high, but yet realistic expectations for yourself. Remember Rome was not built overnight...but it was built!

Keep it Simple. Consider choosing an exercise routine that needs minimal equipment, no specific venue, are not weather dependent, has minimal or no ongoing costs, and requires no other team members. Brisk walking, running, swimming, rowing, and hiking are a few great examples to get you started.

Changing Cultural Norms – Top Ways to Change Movement Culture

- **Invest in Movement**. Spend time with family and friends doing movement based activities. Rather than organize social situations around food, plan leisure time around movement. Try skating, swimming, hiking, biking, or skiing. Movement based activities with family and friends can be exceptionally fun.

- **Strategic Movement**. Plan your commute to work around movement. When parking, find a faraway parking space instead of fighting for a closer spot. Those extra steps really can make a difference.

- **Schedule Walking Breaks** whenever you can find the time at the office. Ideally these should take place every 45-75 minutes. Even a short 2 – 3 minute walk is enough to stimulate muscle and brain activity. Other options include walking at lunch, or coffee and washroom breaks. At the workplace, when you go to the restroom, use a facility on a different floor, and take the stairs instead of the washroom closest to you.

- **Choose the Stairs** over the elevator.

- **Maximize your Time**. For those of you with young kids, take advantage when your kids are engaged in extracurricular activities. This is a perfect opportunity to be active yourself. For example, when dropping your kids off at a sporting event, go for a walk, run or even take the time to go to the gym for a quick workout.

- **Schedule "Walk / Talk" Meetings** and take your next business meeting on the road. Go for a walk to discuss ideas with colleagues or arrange your next business meeting within walking distance from the office.

- **Start a Walking Routine After Meals**. Immediately after dinner take a 10-minute stroll. Don't let the weather stop you – that's what jackets, boots, and umbrellas are for. Post dinner is the perfect time for a walk and will aid in your digestion.

- **Develop a Phone Walk Habit.** Never sit while talking on the phone. Instead walk around the office or home. You'll surprise yourself at how well you can concentrate on a conversation and you won't even notice the exertion.

- **Move During Commercials.** When watching television, always get up and move during commercials. During a single 1-hour show, you can get in more than 10 minutes of activity.

- **Seek Out Opportunities for Movement**. Next time you're at the airport take a good walk around the terminal. You'll be surprised at how much ground you can cover.

What are your Goals?

Having goals is an important exercise in making progress in creating a physically active lifestyle. When you know where you want to go, you are more likely to get there. While some choose to live without goals and simply go where life takes them. Others take more proactive or an affirmative approach and set what are called, SMART goals.

Despite our great intensions we are a people that love to set goals. Yet the sad reality is, that the majority of us will fail to achieve them. How many people swear they are going to lose weight for the umpteenth year in a row, or say this is the year they will "get healthy." More often than not, our intensions outdo our actions. But what if you were to experience a better way. What if you did something different too achieve your goals by being SMART.

The acronym SMART has proven to be highly effective and can transform your goals into reality.

S – Specific: this is the who, what, where, when, and how of your goal

M – Measurable: you've got to be able to measure your goal in some way. Otherwise how will you know you've reached it?

A – Attainable: if you really want to set yourself up for success, the goal should be something you can feasibly attain.

R – Realistic: something that you are willing and able to work towards. This should be something challenging, but yet not unattainable.

T – Timely: your goals should have a specific time-line; a date by which you want to achieve them. Otherwise, you will have no motivation to reach your goal in a specific time.

Realistic SMART Goal Example: "Starting next week, I am going to do some form of cardio for 30 minutes, at least 3 days each week. I will commit to this schedule for the next 90 days. At the end of 3 months, I will make a new goal to improve my physical health.

Exercise Prescription – Preparing the Body for Movement

When we hear the word prescription we often think about pills proscribed by a physician. However, many forward thinking doctors are now recognizing the importance of movement and proscribing exercise to their patients. Daily physical activity is a powerful tool and when used correctly can better every aspect of your life. So let's get started and take a look at some of the most common forms of exercise. But first, let's talk about preparing the body for movement and how you should start and end each exercise session.

General Warm-up

When you begin any exercise routine a warm-up and cool-down is critical. The warm-up prepares the body for activity, helping to prevent injury, which can be more susceptible to injury when cold. The cool-down helps the body clear lactic acid that builds up during any activity. Less lactic acid means less soreness and stiffness the next day!

What is the ideal warm-up?

The warm-up should include specific exercises targeting those muscles used in the exercise. The intensity of the warm-up should begin at a low level gradually building to the level of intensity required during exercise.

For most people, 5 to 10 minutes is long enough. However in cold weather the duration of the warm-up should be increased.

The warm-up aims to:

- prepare the body and mind for the activity
- increase the body's core temperature
- increase heart rate
- increase breathing rate.

What about the cool-down?

Too many people neglect the cool-down at the end of an exercise session. A proper cool-down is important, especially after vigorous exercise because the body needs time to slow down and it is an important step in aiding recovery. The cool down should occur immediately after training activities and should last 5 to10 minutes.

The cool-down can be the same sort of exercise as the warm-up but with low intensity body movement such as jogging or walking substituted for running.

Stretching

Stretching activities can be included in the warm-up and cool down. There is now less emphasis on static-stretching during the warm-up, so stretches should move the muscle groups through the full range of movement required in the activity being performed (active stretching).

Static stretching is still appropriate during the cool-down and can be used to improve flexibility. However, avoid static stretching before exercise at all costs.

Important Tips for stretching

- warm-up the body prior to stretching
- stretch before and after exercise (active stretching during the warm up, static stretching during the cool down)
- stretch all muscle groups that will be involved in the activity
- stretch gently and slowly
- never bounce or stretch rapidly
- stretch gently to the point of mild discomfort, never pain
- do not hold your breath when stretching; breathing should be slow and easy.

Tools in your toolbox: Developing Cardiovascular Fitness

Cardiovascular fitness relates to the body's ability to generate energy and deliver oxygen to working muscles. It is considered the most important component of physical fitness and is one of the best indicators of overall health. Imagine walking up a flight of stairs several stories high. Individuals with a high level of cardiovascular fitness would find this easy, while individuals with poor cardiovascular capacity may find themselves out of breath.

We often hear about the benefits of doing "cardio" exercise and how it improves our fitness, reduces one's risk of lifestyle diseases, and helps with weight management. Along with a host of other benefits, improving your cardiovascular system may be the most important investment you ever make.

"Vitality is a crown on a healthy person's head, that only a sick person can see."

Aerobic or Endurance Training

Aerobic activity improves cardiorespiratory fitness

For people of all ages, cardiorespiratory conditioning can be achieved through many activities. As long as the activity places sufficient demand on the heart and lungs, improved fitness is possible.

Samples of Aerobic Type Activities

- Running
- Skating
- Rowing
- Hiking
- Snow shoeing
- Jumping Rope
- Elliptical Trainer
- Step Aerobics
- Zumba
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Dance
- Brisk walking
- Cross-country skiing

1 - 10 Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale	
0	Rest
1	Really Easy
2	Easy
3	Moderate
4	Sort of Hard
5	Hard
6	
7	Really Hard
8	
9	Really, Really, Hard
10	Maximal: Just like my hardest race

Frequency

3-5 times per week with no more than two days rest between sessions. At least 24 hours is required in between sessions for adequate recovery.

Example: Three weekly cardio sessions could be placed on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The duration of each cardio session would depend on the intensity of each session. The greater the intensity the shorter the duration. Ideally, aerobic exercises should last 20-60 minutes.

Intensity of Training

Healthy adults looking to develop their cardio respiratory fitness should train between 65% -85% of their maximum heart rate.

Sometimes it is hard or inconvenient for exercisers to physically measure or calculate heart rate when exercising. Consequently, the perceived exertion scale (*The Borg Scale*) is highly effective at measuring exercise intensity.

Perceived exertion for aerobic activities should range from 'moderate' to 'really hard' on the Borg Scale.

Time of Training

20 – 60 Minutes of continuous or intermittent aerobic activity. Intermittent activity can accumulated in 10-minute segments throughout the day. This is especially helpful for busy people.

Anaerobic Training

Anaerobic ability is developed quite differently than aerobic exercise. Anaerobic training leads to greater performance in short duration, high intensity activities, which last from mere seconds, up to about 2 minutes.

Types & Examples of Anaerobic Activities

- Sprinting
- Hill Climbing
- Jumping Rope
- Heavy Weight lifting
- Interval training
- 12 reps of 30 seconds of maximal effort cycling with 30 seconds of rest in between
- 10 reps of 10 seconds maximal sprint with 2 minutes rest in between
- 6 X 1 minute of maximal effort rowing with 1 minute of rest.

Frequency

The frequency of training sessions ideally should be at least 2X per week to obtain the greatest benefit.

Intensity

Talking is difficult throughout
Perceived exertion is prescribed ass 7-10 on Borg's scale
85-95% of Max Heart Rate

Time

2-12 second effort intervals
5-120 sec per effort interval
The recovery interval should be equal to or up to five times longer than the effort interval.

Aerobic VS Anaerobic – Which is right for you?

Anaerobic training should be reserved for already fit individuals looking to achieve specific goals related to explosive power, and speed. Individuals who train at high intensities run the risk of injury. For individuals looking to develop a general fitness, *choose aerobic exercises* such as walking, jogging, biking, swimming, etc.

Developing a Resistance Training Program

Resistance training helps you develop and maintain a healthy body composition. By developing muscular strength and endurance, daily activities such as carrying groceries and shoveling snow become less risky, as the chances for injury become decreased.

Improving overall muscle strength and endurance, individuals following a resistance training program can develop lean muscle mass, which lowers your risk for disease.

For the average person, resistance training with heavy weights is not recommended because it can induce a sudden and dangerous increase in blood pressure. Extreme caution should be used when lifting heavy weights and is only recommended for experienced weight lifters. Therefore, individuals looking to get stronger should focus on developing their muscular endurance.

Muscular Endurance

Resistance training should be done at a moderate to slow speed, use the full range of motion, and not impair normal breathing. The resistance training recommended by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) includes one set of 8 to 12 repetitions of 8 to 10 different exercises.

Exercises should be geared to the body's major muscle groups (legs, arms, shoulders, trunk, and back) and should not focus on just one or two body areas. These types of movements are referred to as Compound Exercises.

Types of exercises for Developing Muscular Endurance

Pushups	Bicep curls	Chin ups	Sit ups	Static plank
Squats	Lunges	Burpies	Bench press	Deadlift
Leg curls	Shoulder press	Wide grip pull ups		

Frequency - At least 3 times per week.

Intensity

Aim for 8-12 repetitions per exercise. At the end of each exertion muscles should be fatigued and unable to complete another repetition. If however, fatigue has not set in, increase weight, or decrease recovery time between sets.

Time

Aim for 20-60 Minutes of weight training 3-5 times per week. Ideally, 1-3 sets should be performed for 8-10 different exercises.

Developing a Flexibility Training Program

Flexibility is needed to perform everyday activities with relative ease. To get out of bed, lift children, or sweep the floor, we need flexibility. Flexibility tends to deteriorate with age, often due to a sedentary lifestyle. Without adequate flexibility, daily activities become more difficult to perform. It is important to include flexibility training as part of your regular fitness routine. Improved flexibility may enhance performance in aerobic training and muscular conditioning.

Frequency

- 2-3 days per week minimum
- Ideally after every exercise session

Intensity

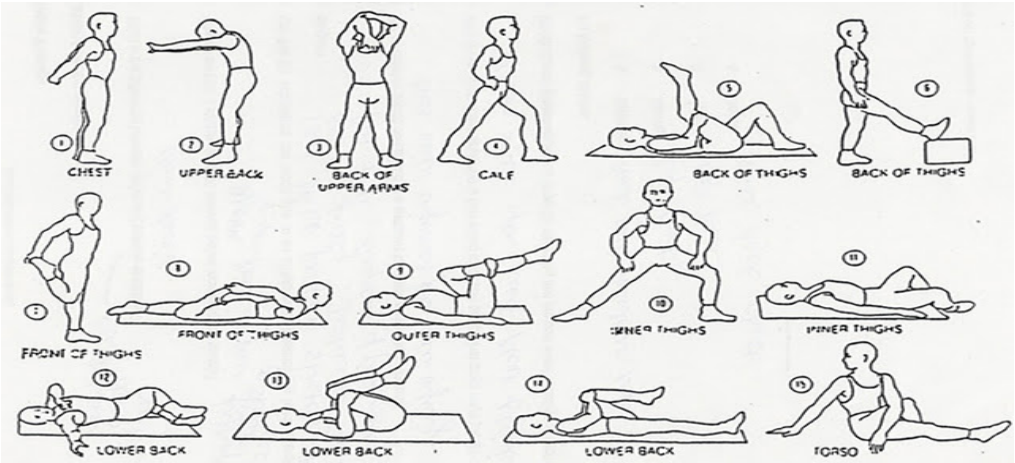
- Point of tightness or mild discomfort
- Breath normally while you stretch
- Hold stretch for 30-60 Seconds
- 2-4 Repetitions per stretch

Time

- 5-10 minutes (minimum)
- Include all major muscle groups

Type

- Dynamic stretching before exercise
- Static stretching after exercise



Elements of Rest & Recovery

Sleep: Aim to get at least 7 - 8 hours of sleep each night. Be consistent with your sleep patterns each day – even on weekends. Also, get to bed early. Hours slept before twelve at night are proven to be more effective then those slept after.

Hydration: Drinking adequate amounts of water are critical to health, energy, recovery, and performance. Drink at least 3 liters of water per day. Urine should be clear. Yellow urine indicates dehydration.

Nutrition: Everything you eat has the ability to help heal your body, or to poison it. Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetable, whole grains – avoid processed foods. Consume a diet of whole plant based foods. Whole foods have antioxidants, which aid in recovery and prevent free radicals, which encourage disease.

Travel Tips for Maintaining High Energy

"I travel and have a very busy schedule. How can I possibly exercise while on the road?"

"If it is important to you, you will find a way. If not you'll find an excuse."

With a little thought and planning, exercise on the road is easier than you might think. Just because you're traveling doesn't mean you have to give up your regular workout routine. There are plenty of ways to keep active while traveling. Remember being active doesn't mean spending hours at the gym. Being active is about incorporating small segments of movement into your everyday life to increase the overall quality. Daily physical movement can increase energy levels, improve cognitive function, and increase metabolism.

Top ways to keep active while traveling

- Stay in hotels that have small workout facilities or pools
- Go for a morning walk or run
- Keep track of your progress in a diary (if you write it down, it will be easier to see your success)
- Walk rather then take taxies everywhere. If you're exploring a new city, the best way to become familiar with the area is by foot. Make sure to allow enough time to walk to your next destination.
- Go for a walk in the evening, rather then going back to the hotel to watch TV. Ask the hotel staff for a safe walking route in a well-lit area. Simply walk anytime you can and keep a pedometer on your belt to keep track of steps. Ideally shoot for over 10,000 steps / day.
- Choose the stairs over the elevator in your hotel and any other building or mall you explore.

Make the Choice Not to Decay – Go With Harry's Rules for Longevity

1. ***Exercise six days a week for the rest of your life.*** *Don't think of it as exercise. Think of it as sending a constant 'grow' message…as telling your body to get stronger, more limber, functionally younger, in the only language your body understands. Do it because it's the only thing that works.*
2. ***Do serious aerobic exercise four days a week for the rest of your life.*** *Hard aerobics, working up a good sweat, is our favorite exercise rhythm because [it] brings out our youngest and best biology: strong, fast, energetic, and optimistic all day long. Tell your body it's springtime.*
3. ***Do serious strength training, with weights, two days a week for the rest of your life.*** *Generally, we aren't aware of nerve decay as we get older, but it's the main reason our joints wear out, our muscles get sloppy, and our ability to be physically alert and powerful begins to fade. And it is reversible with strength training.*
4. ***Spend less than you make.*** *Time to quit playing and come inside. Come inside your income. Try to do it early. It takes time and earlier is better, but do it.*
5. ***Quit eating crap!*** *Never go on a diet again. The only way to lose weight is to embark on a program of steady, vigorous exercise, avoiding the worst foods (French fries, almost all fast food, processed snacks with names that end with the letter "O"), and eating less of everything.*
6. ***Care.*** *There have to be people and causes you care about. Doesn't seem to matter much what the causes are. They don't have to be important to other as long as they're important to you.*
7. ***Connect and commit.*** *There is a terrible temptation as we age to close up shop and narrow our lives. Well, don't. It's killing us. That means adding friends, doing more stuff, getting out there, and being involved.*

Produced in collaboration with Matt MacDonald, Bsc. Human Kinetics and " We Move This Town"