



LIFE HACK:

FITTING IN BITE SIZE BITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

By Erin Patton, Physical Activity Promotion Coordinator, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

You may have heard the phrase “sitting is the new smoking” and thought, “That doesn’t apply to me; I am active!” But you can be active and still sit too much. The average Canadian spends at least 10 hours a day sitting. Whether it is sitting at a desk, in front of a screen, in a car, or just lounging around on the couch, we sit too much. And it is affecting our health.

You may have also heard of life hacks. A life hack is a tip to help make your life easier. We want it to be easier for you to be physically active, and to break up time spent with sitting by adding in physical movement. Here is our recipe for physical activity snacks – a life hack!



Change up the recipe!

Here are some healthy, active substitutions to break up sitting time.

At home, try to:

- Walk to the mailbox instead of driving
- Rise up and down on your toes while brushing your teeth
- Stand at the sink and wash your dishes by hand
- Do chair sit ups while on the computer
- Have spontaneous living room dance parties!

At work, there are many ways to get in short breaks throughout the day:

- Park at the far end of the parking lot
- Get off the bus a few stops early
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Take a short dance break in your office
- Set a timer and every 30 minutes get up and do 1 minute of energetic activity
- Print to a far printer
- Use a washroom on another floor or further down the hall

In the classroom, help break up the sitting routine for kids with:

- Chair aerobics
- Stretches
- Walk and talk breaks with groups
- Physical activity videos in the classroom – visit our YouTube channel for the Get off the Couch video
- Classroom physical activity challenges
- Lead children the long way to their next classroom

View Winnipeg *in motion* on YouTube for short Energizer breaks and the Get Off the Couch video.

Physical Activity Snacks

You can make small changes to your daily routine to help fit in short periods of activity. Use an active lifestyle approach. This means looking for ways to fit in bite size snacks of activity. Look for parts of your day when you sit for long periods of time and add 1-2 minutes of activity every half hour. Regular short breaks from sitting can increase your cognitive (brain) performance and work productivity, reduce stress, and improve your mood. Make those activity breaks 10-15 minutes and they can add up to the recommended 150 minutes per week.

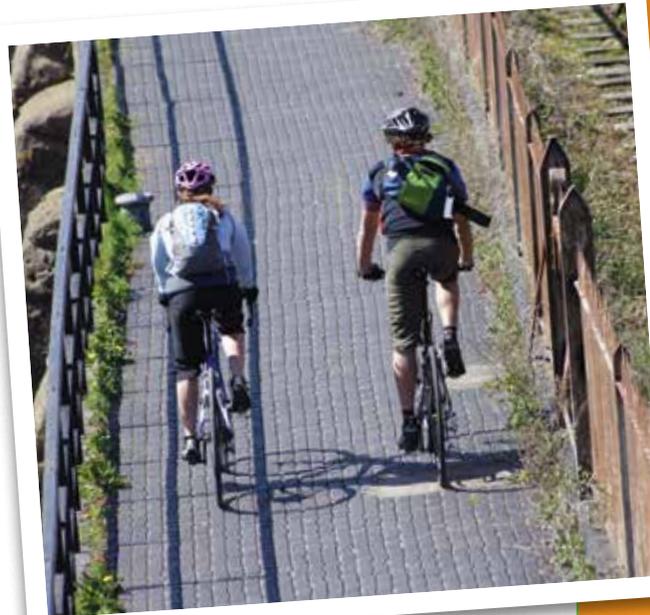
Recipe for success – Ingredients:

Choose any from the list below:

- Walk or bike to do an errand
- Take a quick family walk after dinner
- Do some squats while brushing your teeth
- Stand on the bus instead of sitting

But don't forget those quick bite size snacks!
During long bouts of sitting, take a few 1-2 minute activity breaks every half hour.

- Walk to talk to colleagues instead of emailing them
- Set a calendar reminder to pop up every hour to take a stretch break from your desk
- Take a break to climb a few flights of stairs
- Get some activity in during a commercial break while watching TV



Directions:

Have these physical activity snacks at work, school and home. Use them to increase your energy and refocus. Try them in a meeting, or use them to relax a group of children. A short stretching break in the middle of the day at school can help improve flexibility, improve circulation and coordination and allow kids to focus better on the next lesson.

For more ideas on physical activity snacks visit:

www.winnipeginmotion.ca | www.participaction.com | www.gov.mb.ca/healthyschools