

informative
articles

[*move* Your Body]

Ditch the Gym



We don't move our bodies enough.

You already know this. They weren't meant to sit all day at a computer. They weren't meant to lounge in front of a television and they weren't meant to drive kids around all day in a car. Our bodies are meant to MOVE.

You've heard that exercise eases stress? And you've heard that going for a walk clears the mind? Well it turns out that there are actually physiological reasons for what we know intuitively. Exercise releases powerful endorphins into the body which not only flood the body with good feelings, but also block the release of stress hormones -- catecholamines and cortisol among them.

One study showed that steady-paced aerobic exercise improved the brain's ability to solve problems and make decisions fast and effectively. Exercise also improves mood and can actually make you feel happy. We also know that exercise actually BOOSTS your energy levels and helps you sleep better at night! So why don't many of us exercise regularly?

I feel like the reason we so often quit "exercise programs" is because they hurt! When we decide to "get into shape" most of us start by doing way too much. We do video programs that are meant for top level athletes, we begin with a class at the gym and arduously complete the whole thing, huffing and puffing all the while. But if you can just do a little at a time, take baby steps so to speak, you will find that exercise comes easier and easier to you. Go on a ten minute walk. Stretch for ten minutes. Do 10 jumping jacks 4 times a day. Don't hurt yourself. Moving your body should feel good. And you should feel good the next day, too. And let's stop using this word "exercise!" It conjures up pictures of tight workout clothes, sweaty smelling gyms and unnaturally muscled people. We all know that regular exercise is important, but does that really mean going to the gym? Absolutely not. Moving your body is what that means.

Some people love going to the gym. They love doing the classes and lifting weights and running,

visit me at www.melissachappell.com

a gentler and happier approach to health

Melissa
Chappell
.com

Ditch the Gym

and they use it as personal meditation time. They go alone. They put on headphones, turn on good music and start moving their bodies. If you're one of these people: wonderful! But you don't have to go to the gym to get the benefits of moving your body. You just have to choose to be active.

Those who engage in a daily physical practice find that their mind clears, answers to problems come into focus and ideas come. They are able to continue the day with a fresh start and a clear head.

Consider, too, that moving slowly throughout the day can burn twice the amount of someone who exercises like crazy at the gym for one hour, and then sits at an office chair all day.

Choosing to be active means to choose to dance with your kids for one song on the radio, even if you've got a million things pressing. It means to walk to your neighbor's house to deliver the oatmeal cookies you made for them. It means parking farther away when shopping. It means setting a timer when you're working on the computer and choosing to do twenty jumping jacks every twenty minutes. It means gardening, hiking, swimming, stretching - using your body.

Here are some great ideas for being more active:

- Put on some music and dance with a child
- Park farther away and walk to do your errands
- Set a timer when you're working on the computer and do ten leg lifts at each interval
- Ride a bike to go visit a friend
- Start a garden
- Learn to Salsa dance
- Pick ten exercises from a good yoga website and hold each for 30 seconds
- Learn Tai Chi and practice it outside in the sun
- Help a child clean his or her room
- Get in the kitchen and cook
- Take a dog for a walk
- Breathe deeply in and out for five minutes
- Walk to where you can watch a sunset or sunrise
- Push a child on a swing
- Walk to the park
- Organize a baseball game with your family or neighborhood

Moving your body will make you feel better and will increase, not just your *quality* of life, but also the length of time you get to be on this planet.

author: melissa chappell

visit me at www.melissachappell.com

a gentler and happier approach to health