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Wellness

Men, too busy to make time for exercise?

New research suggests some people can get fit quick with 12 minutes of vigorous exercise a week.

You've heard of get-rich-quick schemes.

How about get-fit-quick ones? New research suggests that previously inactive men can whip themselves into cardiovascular shape with just 12 minutes a week of high-intensity training. The study found that participants who pushed themselves to 90 percent of their maximum heart rate for four minutes three times a week increased markers of cardiovascular fitness and decreased their blood pressure levels in 10 weeks.

The catch? You may be spending less time at the gym, but it will feel like a lot more effort. "The truth is that while high-intensity training will result in greater gains in a shorter period of time, high-intensity training is not for everyone," explains Melissa Hendricks, MEd, manager of the Cleveland Clinic Fitness Centers. "In order to achieve similar results in a four- or seven-minute workout, you would have to train at your highest intensity possible for the entire four minutes. Training at that level is not recommended for people who are out of shape, have joint or muscular issues or have a history of heart problems. In addition, if you are just starting an exercise program, working at high intensity is more likely to cause injury, especially if you don't know how to properly perform the exercises.

For most people, I would still recommend 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, at least to start. This way your body becomes more acclimated to exercise and you reduce your risk of injury. You also increase your chances of sticking with a program that is realistic for you." Still, if you need a program that will help jump-start your workout routine, this might be the one for you, but check with your doctor first to make sure you can do high intensity exercise. Also keep this in mind—the study examined only previously inactive people. If you haven't been moving, you're bound to get fitter by working out regularly for 10 weeks. So the conclusion is not a surprise. The researchers observed that this kind of workout does seem to help sedentary people get in shape without a big time commitment, but it will probably not have the same benefits for people who are already active.

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors





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A baby aspirin (or two) a day keeps cancer at bay, along with some of the effects of aging.

The humble aspirin is actually something of a miracle worker. When it comes to protective benefits, few things pack as powerful a punch as this little pill. Consider this: Taking 162 milligrams a day (two babies with beaucoup de water — see below) can reduce your risk of colon and breast, or prostate cancer by up to 40 percent. It has also been shown to reduce the risk of pancreatic, esophageal and stomach cancers. What's more, aspirin is a fountain of youth of sorts. Taking half of a regular aspirin or two baby aspirin a day can reduce the RealAge of a 55-year-old by more than two years! Take aspirin with a glass of warm water; it'll help dissolve the pill faster and decrease the risk of gastric side effects that can occur when the full tablet lands directly on your stomach lining. And of course, always check with your doctor before starting any new health regimen.

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors; adapted from You: The Owner's Manual by Michael F. Roizen, MD, and Mehmet C. Oz, MD

HEALTHY GRILLING SECRETS

America is a nation that loves to BBQ. Here's the bad news and the good news. Charred beef, chicken, pork and fish contain two things that tend to do damage to your body: heterocyclic amines (HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). HCAs form when the amino acids found in the meat's protein and the creatine (found in muscle) react to the high cooking temperatures. PAHs form in grill smoke that's created from meat drippings and then sticks to the meat's surface. Exposure to HCAs and PAHs can increase your risk for a number of cancers, including stomach, esophagus, bladder, breast and prostate. There's even some data to suggest that HCAs increase aging of your arteries.

The good news—marinating foods for at least five minutes prior to cooking appears to considerably lower the formation of HCAs. The amazing thing is it doesn't seem to matter what kind of marinade you use, as long as it's not water or sugar-based. Olive oil and vinegar are good choices. Meanwhile, the amount of PAHs can be reduced by grilling foods at a lower temp to avoid flare-ups. (Use a thermometer to make sure meat is thoroughly cooked. And yes, wash the thermometer after each use to avoid “reinfecting” the meat.)

By: Michael F. Roizen, M.D.





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HEALTHY RECIPE: SALAD NICOISE

Go French with this classic salad, made even more delicious by fresh summer string beans and mixed field greens. It's packed with a variety of nutrients—vitamins A, C, and K, manganese, folate and omega-3 fatty acids—to name a few! Not only is it good for your body, but this beautiful, impressive salad is fun to make and even better to eat. Arrange the ingredients on a big platter for a group of friends or make a single serving, pour a cool drink, and savor a moment for yourself.

Yield: 2 Servings

Ingredients:

4 ounces green beans
3 cups chopped romaine
2 hard boiled eggs, halved
1 medium potato, boiled and sliced
¼ of a red onion, thinly sliced
8 Nicoise or Kalamata olives
5-ounce can solid white albacore tuna in water, drained
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon chopped flat leaf parsley

Instructions:

Bring a large pot of water to a boil, add the beans and cook 3 to 4 minutes until crisp-tender. Plunge the beans into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Pat dry with paper towels.

Divide the lettuce evenly among two bowls, making a bed for the remaining ingredients. Then arrange the eggs, potatoes, onion, olives, tuna, and beans on top.

In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, oil, pepper, and parsley. Drizzle over the salads.

Nutrition Info Per Serving: (half of the recipe)

400 calories, 17 g total fat, 3.5 g saturated fat,
9 g protein, 31 g carbohydrate, 7 g dietary fiber, 6 g sugar,
235 mg cholesterol, 410 mg sodium

By: Sara Quessenberry for Cleveland Clinic Wellness

Healthy Recipe

