



Even laziest can do these exercises

WE ALL KNOW exercise is good for us, yet most of us don't get enough. Many things make it difficult to be active. Back pain is the most frequent cause of decreased physical activity in people under the age 45. Amazingly, 80 percent of people over the age of 30 will experience some type of back problems during their lives. About a third of these people will have reoccurring painful back problems throughout their lifetime, greatly reducing their ability to be active.

The North America Spine Society has released the results of its annual survey on Americans' exercise habits. In a telephone survey of 1,045 adults, more than 75 percent of the respondents indicated they would exercise more if they could fit into their daily routine. About half of the respondents considered themselves "couch potatoes."

Question: Is there an easy way to get more exercise despite physical limitations or a very busy lifestyle?

Answer: Absolutely. The trick is to expand your definition of exercise to include all types of movements that stretch and strengthen muscles throughout the body and throughout the day. In addition to strength and endurance, fitness includes flexibility and balance.

There are many ways to find opportunities to work on these aspects of fitness. We are all familiar with the typical suggestions to take the stairs and park your car at a distance from your destination. With a little imagination, you can get even more creative.

Q: What are good "exercises" for the couch potato?

A: Whether due to injury or just innate laziness, couch potatoes can do more than they

may think. This year, the North American Spine Society published a book titled, "The Couch Potato Workout: 101 Exercises You can Do At Home!" Written by Dr. Joel M. Press, the book is heavily illustrated with little things you can do that may make a difference in your overall fitness.

Try some TV remote control wrist lifts as you surf the channels. Throw in sitting leg raises during commercials. Next, advance to writing the alphabet with each foot while watching your favorite show.

Brushing your teeth? Stand on one leg and bend your knee a bit to work your quads. While drying off after a shower, use the towel to do some upper body stretches to keep things loose and flexible. With a little imagination, you can find many opportunities to move and stretch.

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