



No Gym? No Worries: How to Stay Mentally and Physically Fit at Home

Regular exercise is important to keep your body and your mind healthy.

“With coronavirus out there, there’s a tendency not to exercise, but now it’s even more important,” said Dr. Rajiv Misquitta, director of lifestyle medicine at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center. “If people don’t have a fitness plan at home, they’ll become sedentary and that will affect their health.”

According to Tamara Hew-Butler, associate professor of exercise and sports science at Wayne State University, you should do about 20 to 45 minutes of moderate exercise three times a week, no more than five days a week. But don’t exercise if you have any flu-like symptoms. Research on the response of the body’s immune system shows that moderate exercise is the “sweet spot,” and inactivity or exercising too much can increase your risk of respiratory viruses. Listen to your body. Extreme soreness, pain or fatigue can be signs you’re doing too much.

It’s important to create a simple exercise routine, so you’ll achieve your goals and want to keep exercising.

Here are five exercises to try at home:

1. **Cardiovascular training:** The National Association of Sports Medicine recommends cardiovascular training three to five times a week, or one to three times a week for beginners. Walk or jog in place while watching TV, walk up and down your stairs, dance or do some jumping jacks.
2. **Core:**
 - a. Abdominal crunches provide similar benefits as sit-ups with less strain on your neck and back.
 - b. While planks focus on the core muscles of your abdomen and lower back, they really work the whole body. Planks are an isometric exercise that involves maintaining a position similar to a push-up for the maximum period of time.
 - c. Trunk rotations are usually done with a medicine ball, but you can also use a household item, like a heavy book. Start with two pounds and gradually increase the weight.

3. **Upper body:** In addition to upper body muscles, push-ups work your core. If you can't do push-ups on your toes, start on your knees or plant your feet against a wall. You can also do bicep curls by using water bottles or jugs of laundry soap instead of barbells.
4. **Lower body:** Squats give you the most bang for your buck, working muscles from your feet to your butt and your core. You can use a chair for support, if needed. You can also do lunges, which strengthen your abs and improve balance and mobility. First, you might want to get comfortable doing a single leg stand. Later, extend your arms toward the front, or hold weights for a greater challenge.
5. **Yoga:** A chair pose strengthens the lower back, arm and leg muscles. A tree pose can help you refine and rebalance. Beginners can stand near a wall for support. If you want more intensity, extend your arms toward the ceiling.