

“Get Out and Move”

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Dr. John L. Redman

Bayside Clinic

Most Americans live sedentary lifestyles. They sit at work or school and then come home and sit more and sleep. The groups that sit the most are older teenagers and adults. Most adults sit for 8-10 hours a day. Sedentary lifestyle has been linked to shorter life span and chronic medical conditions.

A sedentary lifestyle is defined as performing activities that do not require much physical exertion. For example, watching television, sitting behind a desk to use a computer, reading, playing video games, and doing homework are all minimally intensive tasks that require little movement.

Scientists have shown that even a small amount of activity can lead to better health outcomes. For instance, why not try walking a message to a co-worker instead of emailing it, or take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park your car farther in the parking lot so you walk more.

A new NIH (National Institute of Health) study of more than 650,000 adults showed that even a low level of leisure time activity led to a longer life expectancy. Walking for 10 minutes a day can lead to a 2 year increase in your life expectancy. If you exercise for more than 45 minutes daily, it can increase your life expectancy by 4 years. For people who were inactive and obese the results were worse, a decrease of life expectancy by up to 7 years.

Activity helps to get your heart pumping and makes your muscles work against gravity burning more calories. One idea is to stand more at work if possible. Exercise also raises your good cholesterol (HDL). Experts recommend moderate exercise for 2.5 hours a week. You can break the exercise up into 10 minute intervals. Try to walk 10 minutes at lunch or after dinner. My goal is to get my patients to try to be active 3-4 times a week. You can try walking or riding a bike.

Your cardiovascular system needs regular, moderate exercise to help maintain your ability to perform physical activities for extended periods. Regular exercise not only strengthens your heart, it also makes the oxygen-delivery process more efficient. This means that people who are sedentary often have weaker hearts than those who are not. Lack of regular exercise can leave you feeling out of breath, along with experiencing a fast heartbeat on the rare occasions when you do perform vigorous physical activities.

It's never too late to begin; start with a mere 10 minute interval, allowing your body to grow accustomed to regular activity. The Wellness Center at Bayside has a wide variety of classes and exercise equipment to help you get active, in addition to a heated pool for patients who have arthritis or joint problems. It helps to have friends and co-workers in the classes that keep you encouraged.

We at Chambers Health strive to continue serving the healthcare needs of our communities providing the best care possible, by being “What You Need, Where You Are”. For any questions please feel free to contact us at 409-267-4126.