Everyday Fitness Regimen

Includes everyday Chores

By: Deborah Liv Johnson

Before we had gyms, Zumba®, spin classes and pedestrian boot camp, we had chores — unadorned, everyday basic chores. We trimmed trees and pushed lawnmowers, scrubbed tubs and floors, worked on our cars and painted our homes, and more often than not, walked where we needed to go.

Most likely, our waists were smaller back then, our biceps larger and our lungs more expansive. We moved with a sense of purpose and pride, and our bodies got what they deserved — fit. We worked and moved and balanced and stretched and felt confident knowing that our bodies could perform the tasks we needed them to do.

But with the progression of convenience and technology, more options and busy lives, we began to hand off our chores to anyone who would take them. Somewhere along the way, we stopped moving.

Walking, walking, walking

In this sedentary age of television, computers and smart phones, it may be wise to rethink daily activities and chores, and to incorporate movement whenever and wherever possible. Walking is a great place to start. It's good for the heart, bones and overall health and requires nothing more than a good pair of walking or tennis shoes (plus some sunscreen and a hat). Begin your new exercise regimen by walking to the grocery store if it's less than a mile away (bring your own small hand cart and sturdy box to tote groceries), and find a walking partner for daily or weekly jaunts in your neighborhood or nearby park. Think of ways to incorporate walking in everything you do — instead of using an elevator, take the stairs, and park at the far end of parking lot, just to add a few more steps.

When you have the opportunity to do something physical, do it. Spend time in your yard or garden, pulling weeds or planting seasonal flowers. Sweep your sidewalk with gusto, wash dishes like a Zen master and feel your body, and your mind, gaining strength and clarity.

Volunteering can be good for your health

Volunteering is an excellent way to keep moving and to stay active. If you enjoy physical activities, check with your church or a local charity to see if they need help with a remodeling project, painting or other handyman-type chores. Some charities need help making or serving meals, or with cleanup. Organizations like The Living Desert™ have programs with training to become a docent or for general volunteer work, providing excellent opportunities to work outside, to be physically active and to get to know other volunteers with similar interests.

Put yourself on restriction

Watching too much television? Hooked on news or programs showing other people being active? If so, make a change and restrict yourself to one hour of television per night, or be revolutionary and skip the T.V. altogether. Instead, take an evening stroll, dance in your living room or practice a little deep breathing and yoga stretches before curling up with a good book. You'll not only feel better but you may even sleep better.

You never know — everyday chores and simple lifestyle adjustments really could change your life.

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