Fitting in Fitness

As the fall semester begins to unfold, it is important to remember to schedule time for physical activity into your day to reenergize and destress. Finding time for fitness can be difficult, especially while some of us are working at home with children who are virtual learning, while also balancing errands, chores, and sleep! The key to fitting in fitness is making it convenient for you. The Mayo Clinic offers great and practical suggestions to help you make fitness a way of life:

1. **Make a commitment:** It is important to plan ahead so other “to-do” items don’t push fitness off your radar. To keep exercise a priority:
   - **Put it on the calendar.** Schedule physical activity as you would any other appointment during the day. Don’t change your exercise plans for every interruption that comes along.
   - **Become part of a team.** Sign up for a sports league or join Employee Health and Wellbeing for our annual Walktober program! Making a commitment to a team is a great motivator.
   - **Join a fitness class.** Sign up for one of our group exercise classes and save it on your calendar! Register here.
   - **Wear an activity tracker or pedometer.** Seeing how far you’ve come may motivate you to do even more.

2. **Enlist family, friends, co-workers and even the family pet:** Activity can be more fun when you have company:
   - **Involve the whole family.** Take group walks before or after dinner. Play catch. Ride your bikes.
   - **Start a lunchtime walking group.** The regular routine and the support of your co-workers may help you stick with the program.
   - **Get your dog into the act.** Take daily walks with the doggo or head to the closest dog park! If you don’t have a dog, borrow one. An enthusiastic dog may give you the motivation you need to lace up your walking shoes.
   - **Recruit a walking buddy.** That way, even on days when you are a bit lacking in motivation, knowing that your friend will soon be at your doorstep ready for a walk can help keep you moving.
   - **Plan active outings.** Make a date with a friend to hike in a local or state park, or take a family trip to the Brandywine zoo.
   - **Get social.** Try a dance club, hiking group or golf league. Encouragement from others can help you stay with a new activity.

3. **Change the time or intensity:** Sometimes, you may not be able to get in a full workout. You can still work toward your fitness goals even when life interrupts your best-laid plans, though.
Breaking it up. It is great if you can get 30 minutes of continuous activity a day, but you can exercise in shorter bursts, too. Even short walks or breaks for activity count toward your daily exercise goal.

Kicking it into high gear. If your activity sessions are vigorous, you only need to exercise half the time to meet the minimum weekly recommendations.

4. Fitting in fitness at home and on the go: Make fitness a priority at home:
   - **Wake up early.** Get up a bit earlier than you normally do and use the extra time to walk on your treadmill or take a brisk walk around the neighborhood.
   - **Make chores count.** Mop the floor, scrub the bathtub, or do other housework at a pace fast enough to get your heart pumping.
   - **Get outside.** Outdoor work counts, too. Mowing the lawn with a push mower is a great way to burn calories. Raking and hoeing strengthen your arms and back and digging works your arms and legs.
   - **Be active while watching TV.** Use hand weights, ride a stationary bike or do a stretching routine during your favorite shows. Get off the couch to change the channel or adjust the volume.
   - **Get more out of errands.** When you go to the mall or grocery store, park toward the back of the lot and walk the extra distance. If you have a little extra time, walk inside for a lap or two before you start shopping. Keep a pair of walking shoes in your car so that you are ready when you find a few minutes for exercise.
   - **Watch our Fitness Class recordings wherever and whenever!** Press start and pause at your own convenience.

5. Work out at work: To fit in more physical activity while you are on the job:
   - **Make the most of your commute.** Walk or bike to work. If you ride the bus, get off a few blocks early and walk the rest of the way.
   - **Take the stairs whenever you can.** If you have a meeting on another floor, get off the elevator a few floors early and use the stairs. Better yet, skip the elevator entirely.
   - **Take fitness breaks.** Rather than hanging out in the lounge with coffee or a snack, take a short walk or try a barre workout in your office space.
   - **Skip the email.** Walk to a co-worker instead of leaving a voicemail or sending an email.
   - **Take it on the road.** If you travel for work, plan ahead. Bring your jump-rope or choose a hotel that has fitness facilities. If you are stuck in an airport waiting for a plane, grab your bags and take a walk.