Exercise challenge

Most of us are familiar with the benefits of exercising, but the reality is we do not always have the time or motivation to start an exercise program or get to the gym. The good news is that the best piece of exercise equipment is with us all day long—our own bodies! With simple body weight exercises, we can increase energy levels, reduce the risk of chronic diseases, and increase strength, flexibility and productivity.

Studies show with just seven minutes of intense interval training, or three 10 minutes bouts of moderate activity, our bodies produce molecular changes within the muscles comparable to several hours of running or biking. Use this challenge as a starting point to begin a new active lifestyle.

The Challenge

Alternate between each exercise listed below for 20-30 seconds at a high intensity. Give yourself a 10 second rest interval. Aim for two to three circuits on three nonconsecutive days each week.

- Jumping jacks
- Squats
- Abdominal crunch
- Push up with side rotation
- Wall sit
- Triceps dip on chair
- Alternating lunge
- Side plank
- Push-up
- Plank
- High knees running in place
- Step-up onto chair

For intense interval training, your discomfort should be around an eight out of ten.
Give it a try

INFORMAL VOLUNTEERING

Giving back on a regular basis has many health benefits. If you find it hard to find volunteering opportunities, then try practicing informal volunteering.

1. Think of a family, friend or co-worker that needs help. What is one thing you can do for them today?
2. Practice generosity by paying for someone’s coffee or making a donation. Generosity is contagious.
3. Make a goal to strive to do one informal volunteering activity every day.

Continuum of creativity

1. Take breaks. Go for a walk or chat with a friend to feel rejuvenated and increase productivity.
2. Got an idea? Write it down. Often times our best ideas come to us when we aren’t working on that specific project. Carry a notebook or start a note in your phone to capture thoughts.
3. Get away from the computer. Get moving or take time to do your favorite hobby!
4. Listen to new music. Music can be stress relieving and a motivating.
5. Allow yourself to make mistakes. Don’t let fear get in the way of achieving something great.
6. Go somewhere new. Try out a new coffee shop or travel to a new destination.
7. Be confident. Stop trying to be someone else’s idea of “perfect.”
8. Clean your workspace. Our environment impacts productivity. Clean up the space around you to give your thoughts room to flow.
9. Try something new. Set a goal and plan how you will achieve it.
10. Utilize your strengths. Focus on developing your strengths instead of fixing weaknesses. Use your skills and talents every day.

Power of light

Natural light has the power to synchronize the mind and body. Light interacts with receptors in our eyes, influencing our circadian rhythm. This controls sleep cycles, hormone release, body temperature and mood. Don’t confuse the benefits of natural light with Vitamin D, which is produced by exposure to UV rays.

It is not surprising that those who work near a window report higher quality of life, better sleep, and improved productivity and potential. Since many work indoors most of the day, there are a few ways to optimize natural light exposure.

When inside at work or at home, try to use natural light if possible. Lighting should mimic outside conditions. Make sure there is adequate cool, bright lighting during the day and warm, dim lighting in the evening. Blue light exposure in the evening, from phones and computers, contributes to poor sleep, leading to other chronic health conditions.

The easiest way to increase your light exposure is to simply get outside. Try to get outside on your breaks or hold a walking meeting. If you can’t get outside, reserve a spot near a window to take a break with natural light.

Strawberry salad dressing

Serves: 6 | Serving size: 3 tbsp | Total time: 10 min | Prep: 5 min

Ingredients:
- 3/4 cup fresh strawberries or frozen (defrosted)
- 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup of olive oil
- 1 tbsp of basil
- 1 tsp of black pepper
- 1 tsp of thyme

Directions: Place all ingredients in a food processor and blend for one minute. Serve on top of your favorite greens along with tomatoes and cucumbers.

Nutrition Facts:
- Calories: 90
- Total Fat: 9 g
- Sodium: 2 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 2 g
- Dietary Fiber: 1 g
- Total Protein: 0 g

Nutrition information computed using nutritiondata.com

CONTACT US AT NDPERSWellness@sanfordhealthplan.com
(844) 742-0014

QUICK LINKS: sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers/dakotawellnessprogram

SET-UP A mySanfordHealthPlan ONLINE ACCOUNT: sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin