

PURSUIT

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Florida Blue 
BetterYou 

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

Short Amounts of Activity Can Do Your Heart Good



It's no secret that regular physical activity helps build heart health. Lowering your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, depression and even some cancers is a comforting thought. But in a world of time demands, you may not think you can do 150 minutes every week. The secret to boosting activity is doing little things that add up.

Your heart appreciates every step you take. Try walking or biking to the grocery store or to school with your kids. Take the stairs instead of the elevator at work or use the bathroom on a

different floor. Skip the movies and go for active outings like bowling, mini golf or paddle boarding. Bypass the bus tour for a kayak or bike outing.

There's no need to miss your favorite TV program. It can be a great distraction from workouts on a stationary bike or treadmill. You also might try yoga, strength exercises or calisthenics while getting in your screen time.

Remove as many obstacles as possible. If you like a schedule, plan activity for the time of day with fewest barriers and be flexible with alternatives when your schedule changes. If you

like to socialize, a fitness class or walking club could be right for you. If you need alone time, your best choice could be running, swimming or yoga.

Even with all the small changes, you still may not get at least 150 minutes of activity a week—only 21 percent of Americans do. Just remember that physical activity doesn't have to be all or nothing. Even when you can't manage 30 to 60 minutes of activity, several short periods of movement throughout the day will do the body good.

Resources: [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)

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Manage Your Energy Bank

While it's impossible to increase the hours in a day, it is possible to improve the quantity and quality of energy available to you.

The way your body stores energy is a lot like how a bank account works. You start each day with a balance—the amount of energy you can use to get through the day. You can either deposit or withdraw from your energy bank. As with a real bank, the goal is to:

1. Manage your average daily balance so you have the energy for all that you want to do in your daily life
2. Leave more time and energy for the end of the day to spend time with friends and family
3. Have some energy left over to deal with life's curveballs so that you avoid physical, mental or emotional bankruptcy

To maximize your energy, small recovery rituals can help. It's

important to check your energy level every 90 minutes and see what you can do to keep it from getting too low. Did you know you have four types of energy?

- **Physical**—the right balance of fuel and rest to help you accomplish things you want to do. Ways to refuel: Climb a flight of stairs, do a set of pushups, walk or jog around the block.
- **Mental**—your focus, attention and clarity to make decisions and be creative and productive. Ways to refuel: Go for a walk and listen to music. Let your mind wander and consciously not think about what you were working on.
- **Emotional**—the capacity to be yourself, to be responsive, calm and passionate. Ways to refuel: Call or text someone you enjoy and make plans to get together soon. This creates excitement!
- **Spiritual**—your sense of purpose and connection to values, people, nature and community. It can include

faith as well as mindfulness. Ways to refuel: Write down names of people you want to help or how you want to be remembered. You don't have to be religious to increase spiritual energy, just reflect on how you want to live your life.

These energy types are connected. The energy level in one area can significantly impact the level in another. For instance, low physical energy can leave you drained emotionally and mentally. However, if you learn to gauge each energy type on its own, it's easier to determine where to focus attention and how to manage your energy.

We all have times when our energy lags a little and taking a nap is not an option. Fortunately, a few yoga poses can help boost your energy so you can power on throughout the day. Check out this [video](#).

Resource: [WebMd.com](#); Successful People Do This – Better You Lifestyle Improvement Program

Simple Roasted Butternut Squash Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1 butternut squash—peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Toss the butternut squash with olive oil and garlic in a large bowl. Season with salt and black pepper. Arrange on a baking sheet.
3. Roast in preheated oven until the squash is tender and lightly browned, 25 to 30 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of [AllRecipes.com](#). For nutritional information, [click here](#).

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