

Health for the Whole Family
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10 WAYS TO STAY FIT ON A SKINNY BUDGET

Whether it's eating out less, canceling vacations, or saving every last available dollar, a lot of people are making tough decisions about their finances these days. For many, forgoing a gym membership may be one of these tough decisions. But, the fact is, there are plenty of low-cost alternatives to a gym that can give you the fitness results you want.

The most important aspect of staying fit is to engage in physical activity on a regular basis. This physical activity could be anything from walking to running to even cleaning your house. As long as your heart rate goes up for an extended period of time, you can experience all the benefits of a more structured workout.

Below, is a list of 10 ways to stay healthy without breaking the bank.

1. Become a member of your home gym: While a home gym doesn't necessarily require any equipment (a large empty space and a flight of stairs could be all you need), you may consider investing in low-cost multi-purpose equipment. An exercise ball, a workout step, a couple sets of hand weights, and a resistance band, are all inexpensive pieces of workout equipment that can be used to strength train and tone your body.

2. Walk or run outside: You can get an intense, heart-pumping workout by walking or running around your neighborhood and the only equipment you'll need is a good pair of shoes. Indoor malls are a great alternative if the weather takes a turn for the worse. And if you have a dog, try to increase the number of walks you take with your pet during the week or lengthen them. You and your pet will share in the rewards of the increased activity.

3. Pop in a DVD: Thousands of workout DVDs of various intensities are available for all fitness levels. Visit the DVD section of your local library, browse online fitness Web sites, borrow DVDs from friends, or look to the hundreds of on demand free workouts available through your local cable provider.

4. Play with your kids: Don't just watch your kids have fun; join in! A game of tag, kickball, or four square is a great way to get moving and create some lasting memories with your kids.

5. Workout around the house: Chores can become exercise when you increase your heart rate for at least 10 minutes. Indoors, increase your intensity while vacuuming and scrubbing floors. Outdoors, you can get your heart pumping by mowing the lawn, raking the leaves, shoveling snow, or pulling up weeds.

6. Play sports: While some organized sports can be expensive, you can save money by purchasing used equipment. Consider garage sales and used sporting goods stores, and even asking your friends, for sports equipment like baseball gloves, tennis rackets, footballs, badminton sets and more. Play on an organized team or individually against friends.

7. Go to a park: Visit a local park and throw a Frisbee around with your friends or go hiking along the trails.

8. Old school workouts: Don't overlook the "old school" exercise methods, like sit-ups, push-ups, lunges and jumping jacks. These exercises don't require any equipment and can be done just about anywhere.

9. Dance: Turn on your favorite music and get moving for at least 20 minutes. You'll have fun while you break a sweat.

10. Join a club: Joining a fitness club, such as a biking, running, or walking club, makes you more accountable and thus more likely to stick to a fitness program. Plus, having a group of people to support you is a great motivator. Depending on what club you join, little to no equipment may be needed or it is likely you already own what you need to participate.

Saving money doesn't mean you should stop making fitness a priority. In the long run, preventing illness by maintaining a healthy weight and eating right will save you the most.

Preventive medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) provide. Osteopathic physicians are fully-licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas including surgery. D.O.s are trained to consider the health of the whole person and use their hands to help diagnose and treat their patients.

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