

Daily Devotional, April 3, 2020 Stay Fit!

Folks,

Each day I have been sending you messages on keeping our spiritual and mental states healthy. It happens that yesterday made me much more aware of how important it is for us to keep our physical state healthy as well.

My daughter, Natalie, lives in Chicago and had been feeling a high level of anxiety over being shut-in and detached from friends and family. She came over and we spent the day outdoors together. Laura, Natalie and I (keeping up our 6' social distancing), spent the afternoon weeding, planting, talking, laughing, and overall just enjoying each other on a beautiful, mostly sunny day! It felt great just being outdoors, but it also involved some much needed and welcome exercise.

I cut up some wood, and we then spent the evening eating dinner around the fire pit. The evening was a bit chilly, but the warmth of the fire kept us comfortable as we got a much needed opportunity to “catch up” and to feel the added warmth of being together again, sharing our latest news, some laughs, and most of all, love and companionship.

This time spent together made me see how important companionship—even at a distance is important, and equally important, is our need for sunshine and activity.

Most all of us have access to the internet and can look up many different ways to accomplish these types of activities, but I did a bit of searching and thought that the following article from the American College of Sports Medicine covered the topic in a very concise way. All of the article's credits are listed.

A few additional thoughts: Pray and/or meditate while out walking, biking, working in the garden, etc. There is no better time than to be engaged with God while spending time in the midst of God's creation. Also, give thanks, rejoice and be glad that you have been given so much beauty in this world to enjoy, no matter where you are!

Prayer: *God of all blessings, source of all life, We thank you for the mystery of creation: for beauty that the eye can see, for joy that the ear may hear, for the unknown that fills the universe with wonder.*

We thank you for this day: for life and one more day to love, for neighbors whom we cannot presently approach to touch, yet can appreciate from a distance, and one more person to share our love with. By your grace, being a part of this day is one more experience of your presence, for you have promised to be with us, to be our God, and to bring salvation.

For these, and all of your many blessings, we give you thanks, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Don't sit all day! For example:

- If watching TV, get up during every commercial (or periodically) and do a lap around your home or an active chore. For example, throw some clothes in the laundry, do the dishes or take out the garbage. Feel productive after just one show!

Here are current answers to **frequently asked questions** about physical activity and exercise with respect to COVID-19:

- **I'm under quarantine but *not* infected. Should I limit my physical activity?**
 - There are no recommendations at this time to limit physical activity *if you do not have any symptoms*. Symptoms that should prompt evaluation by a health care provider include cough, fever, and shortness of breath.
- **Will exercise help prevent me from getting the virus?**
 - Moderate-intensity physical activity is associated with a healthier immune system. However high-intensity high-volume training may suppress immune function especially if you are unaccustomed to it. Balance your workout program.
- **Are there precautions I should take?**
 - **The most important strategy to prevent infection is to avoid coming into contact with others who are infected with COVID-19.**
- **What if my kids are home with me?**
 - Being active with kids is the most fun of all! Find activities that you can do together – an active gaming video, basketball in the driveway, go for a walk in the neighborhood.
- **What if I start to experience symptoms?**
 - Those experiencing symptoms should follow the CDC recommendations. As these recommendations are changing, below is a link to the CDC Symptoms webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>
- **I'm under quarantine and infected. Should I limit my physical activity?**
 - People who are known to be infected, but asymptomatic, can continue moderate-intensity physical activity but need to use symptoms as a guide. *They should take care to maintain quarantine to prevent virus transmission to others.* If they develop fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should discontinue physical activities and reach out to a health care provider.

Thanks also to Jeffrey Woods, Ph.D., FACSM, and Brandt Pence, Ph.D., ACSM member experts in exercise physiology and exercise immunology who graciously reviewed this blog

Support for the Exercise is Medicine® Initiative is provided by:



Contact United States EIM Representative | 401 W. Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-3233 | 317-637-9200

© 2020 American College of Sports Medicine. All rights reserved worldwide.

Exercise is Medicine® is a global health initiative managed by the American College of Sports Medicine.



Staying Active During COVID-19

March 17, 2020 by Liz Joy, M.D., M.P.H., FACSM, FAMSSM

UPDATED 3/24/2020

Evolving public health guidance will result in changing recommendations on safe physical activity from the team at Exercise is Medicine. We are committed to providing the most up-to-date guidance possible to maintain healthy physical activity.

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presents some challenges to maintaining a physically active lifestyle. COVID-19 is spread by droplet transmission – someone sneezing or coughing into the air or onto a surface, and then the virus enters a new host through the mouth, nose or eyes. The most up-to-date information about COVID-19 should be accessed from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

Given what we understand about transmission of the virus, the CDC recommends avoiding gatherings of 10 people or more and maintaining a social distance of 6 feet or more. (*Updated recommendations from the White House are to limit gatherings to 10 people or less.*) That, along with recommendations related to personal hygiene (hand washing, not touching your face) may create concern about exercising in gyms, where hundreds of people are in and out on a daily basis. **Those at greatest risk for severe complications of COVID-19 are the elderly (defined as age 65 and older), and others with chronic diseases or compromised immune function. Those individuals should avoid gyms altogether, and exercise at home or in their neighborhood.** In many areas of the country and around the world, community members of all ages, have been asked to shelter-in-place, thereby avoiding gyms altogether.

For all of us, young and old, regular physical activity remains an important strategy for staying healthy! Compared to being sedentary, moderate-intensity physical activity is associated with better immune function. Likewise, regular physical activity is associated with lower levels of anxiety and perceived stress (which many of us are feeling in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic).

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend 150-300 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity and 2 sessions per week of muscle strength training. Fit in 2, 5, 10 or 20 minutes, however and wherever you can. Every active minute counts!

A companion Rx for Health Series handout, *Staying Active During the Coronavirus Pandemic*, was also created and [translated into several different languages](#) to share with patients, clients and the public.

Below are some strategies to maintain physical activity and fitness:

Aerobic Activities

Indoor Activities

- Put some music on and walk briskly around the house or up and down the stairs for 10-15 minutes 2 or 3 times per day.
- Dance to your favorite music.
- Jump rope (if your joints can handle it).
- Do an exercise video.
- Use home cardio machines if you have them.

Outdoor Activities (if your local government allows)

- Walk or jog around your neighborhood (avoid crowded spaces and maintain the recommended 6 foot physical distance between individuals).
- Be active in a local park. Spending time in nature may enhance immune function. Be sure to wash your hands when you get home.
- Go for a bicycle ride.
- Do gardening and lawn work (Spring is around the corner!).
- Play active games with your family.

Muscle Strength Training

- Download a strength workout app to your smart phone, such as the 7-Minute Workout (no equipment necessary).
- Do a strength training video.
- Perform yoga – deep breathing and mindfulness can also reduce anxiety.
- Find ways to do simple muscle strengthening exercises around your house such as:
 - Squats or sit-to-stands from a sturdy chair
 - Push-ups against a wall, the kitchen counter or the floor
 - Lunges or single leg step-ups on stairs

Don't sit all day! For example:

- If watching TV, get up during every commercial (or periodically) and do a lap around your home or an active chore. For example, throw some clothes in the laundry, do the dishes or take out the garbage. Feel productive after just one show!

Here are current answers to **frequently asked questions** about physical activity and exercise with respect to COVID-19:

- **I'm under quarantine but *not* infected. Should I limit my physical activity?**
 - There are no recommendations at this time to limit physical activity *if you do not have any symptoms*. Symptoms that should prompt evaluation by a health care provider include cough, fever, and shortness of breath.
- **Will exercise help prevent me from getting the virus?**
 - Moderate-intensity physical activity is associated with a healthier immune system. However high-intensity high-volume training may suppress immune function especially if you are unaccustomed to it. Balance your workout program.
- **Are there precautions I should take?**
 - **The most important strategy to prevent infection is to avoid coming into contact with others who are infected with COVID-19.**
- **What if my kids are home with me?**
 - Being active with kids is the most fun of all! Find activities that you can do together – an active gaming video, basketball in the driveway, go for a walk in the neighborhood.
- **What if I start to experience symptoms?**
 - Those experiencing symptoms should follow the CDC recommendations. As these recommendations are changing, below is a link to the CDC Symptoms webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>
- **I'm under quarantine and infected. Should I limit my physical activity?**
 - People who are known to be infected, but asymptomatic, can continue moderate-intensity physical activity but need to use symptoms as a guide. *Take care to maintain quarantine to prevent virus transmission to others*. If they develop fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should discontinue physical activities and reach out to a health care provider.