Fitting in Fitness

By Zonya Foco, R.D.

Yes. Even YOU can find time to exercise by following these helpful tips
How is it that people who can never find time to exercise can always find time to eat? You may find it interesting to learn that there are 336 thirty-minute time segments in EVERY week. You need ONLY 3 to 5 of these time segments each week for exercise. This requires less than 5% of your time each week! While eating, on the other hand, takes much more time – and we always find time for that!

Exercising Consistently: How to Make Your Good Intentions Come True!
If you are just getting into an exercise routine, it’s important to establish positive feelings of accomplishment, so you will want to continue and be consistent.

WEEK 1
Try starting with only 5 minutes* of easy exercise, but do it 5 times that week. Try marching in place in front of the TV or spinning on your exercise bike. (Keep your intensity low.) You can always find 5 minutes! What’s important is to do it 5 times per week. Do it at the same time each day, which will become your routine exercise time.

*If you are particularly fit, you can start with 10 minutes, but not more. The point is NOT to do all you are physically capable of doing, but rather to establish the concrete habit for CONSISTENCY. Most people agree that consistency is the hardest part!

WEEKS 2, 3, 4 and 5
How does it feel to have exercised 5 times last week? Pretty good, huh? Now, over the next 4 weeks, increase your exercise time up to 7 minutes, then 10, 12, 15, 20, 25, 30. Keep your intensity fairly low. Be sure to keep up 5 times a week!

WEEK 6
Now, don’t you feel GREAT having exercised 5 times a week for 5 weeks? Congratulations! Now you’re ready to add intensity. Increase your walking speed or turn up the resistance on the stationary bike.

Be sure to complete your exercise with stretching!
Benefits of stretching:
• Improves flexibility, mobility and range of motion.
• Helps prevent injuries.
• Promotes better circulation.
• Reduces tension.
• Helps prevent muscle stiffness and soreness after exercise.

Rules for stretching:
• Gently hold a stretch for about 20 seconds.
• Stretch only until you feel a comfortable stretch in the muscle.
• Breathe normally. Do not hold your breath.
• Never force a muscle to stretch too far when true pain is felt.
• Never bounce while stretching! You want a constant, steady stretch.

The benefits of lifting weights are endless!
Helps fight off osteoporosis.
Raises your metabolism (muscle burns more calories than fat does).
Helps you lose inches, look firmer and feel great.
Helps reverse the aging process.

Try an exercise video or DVD on for size
Collage Video offers a free catalog of hundreds of the best exercise videos on the planet with complete descriptions. They even boast that their telephone video consultants have used the tapes themselves, so they can tell you the details! Call Collage Video at 800-433-6769 and ask for their free catalog entitled “The Complete Guide to Exercise Videos” or better yet, visit their Web site at www.collagevideo.com where you can search options by type and view 30 seconds of each one right online.

Don't let the weather dictate your success
Always have a back-up plan for nasty weather. If the weather is nice, I walk, jog, rollerblade or ride my bike. If not, I work out indoors on an exercise machine or to an exercise video. Develop a plan that works best for you.

Arriving home starved: What to do
If you arrive home starved, you'll need something to hold you over until dinnertime. For a snack that's great exercise fuel, it's hard to beat a piece of fruit or glass of fruit juice. Or try a few crackers, 1/2 a bagel or 2 rice cakes. Be sure to chase it with a glass of water. This will give you energy and valuable hydration until dinnertime, while holding off hunger throughout your workout.

Don't let house guests cramp your exercise routine
Why not invite them to join you? Make an early morning walk followed by a nutritious breakfast part of a perfect visit. It’s amazing what a positive impact you can have on your family and friends! Likewise, if you are the guest, look for opportunities to get your exercise in. Even if you go by yourself, it can provide a break for you and your host.
A new way to get your quota
Long gone are the days that you MUST exercise 30-40 minutes NONSTOP to receive the benefits. Studies show that breaking your 30- to 40-minute exercise into 3 or 4 separate 10-minute segments has the same cardiovascular AND weight-loss benefits.

Now there is additional good news from the University of Pittsburgh, where researchers determined that at the end of 6 months, women on the short-bout program exercised 30 more minutes per week than the long-bout exercisers. That's an extra day's worth! They also lost 2 pounds more on average. Obviously 10 minutes here and there is easier to stick to!

Also keep in mind:
10 minutes doesn't work up enough of a sweat to require a shower. Frequent 10-minute exercising breaks will do wonders for alleviating stress!

Calories burned during exercise
Don't get depressed when you think ... I exercised for 20 minutes and all I burned was 160 calories??? Just remember the secret to consistency over time:

• Twenty minutes of exercise 3 times a week for a full year burns 24,960 calories, which translates into 7 pounds of fat burned in a year!

• Thirty minutes of exercise 5 times a week for a year burns 62,400 calories, which translates into 18 pounds of fat burned in a year!

• Forty-five minutes of exercise 5 times a week for a year burns 93,600 calories, which translates into 27 pounds of fat burned in a year!

As you can see, consistency pays!