

## Fitness In Five Minutes A Day?

What is the minimum amount of exercise needed for health and fitness? While it depends on the person, lifestyle, and goals, the general wisdom is that 20-60 minutes per day of cardio pumping, iron lifting, or muscle stretching is necessary.

While no one could deny that these numbers produce optimal results, it is possible to accomplish great things in a shorter time.

The truth is that most badly out-of-shape people have lost a crucial "body-mind" link, a connection that helps them to feel the physical hunger for healthy movement. They hate sweating, don't like walking, and often confuse thirst or emotional pain for hunger.

For those of us who have to ease our way back into an exercise routine, even five minutes a day can be a life saving door into a healthier world.

Here are the rules:

- 1) In order to get the most out of this routine, it should be spread out over the day. We're suggesting sixty seconds of work at 9 am, 12 pm, 3 pm, 6 pm, and 9 pm. This approach is called "Greasing the Groove" and has an exceptionally powerful effect.
- 2) Concentrate on the abdominal muscles. They are the most important group of voluntary muscles in the body, aiding posture, digestion, and sexual function. Critical to athletic performance, they transfer power from the lower to the upper body. When it comes to appearance, the abdominals are called "the window of health"-we are judged more often by our belt-lines than any other single physical factor.
- 3) It is virtually impossible to tone the abdominals without benefiting other muscle groups.

What exercises are best? I would suggest a tri-pronged approach: a "killer" exercise, a light exercise, and one that can be done in public-while walking or driving.

- 1) A roller wheel. These are available in any sporting goods store for about five dollars, and are the only ab exercise device worth your money. Beginners roll out from their knees, more experienced exercisers from their toes.
- 2) Hip lifts. Lay on your back, brace your hands at your sides, cross your feet, lifting feet and knees from the floor. Now contract the abdominal muscles and lift the hips from the floor. Relax and repeat the hip lift for sixty seconds.
- 3) Power breathing. Contract your abdominal muscles HARD as you walk or drive. Combined with proper breathing techniques, this can actually be the perfect ab exercise. There are many yoga, Tai Chi and martial arts teachers who can teach you proper breathing technique-if you haven't had training or studied this, don't assume you already know how-look out a teacher!

While the "Grease the Groove" technique is powerful (and can be used to develop strength, flexibility, or coordination) it is not intended to substitute for your longer cardiovascular workouts. It is offered as an addition, or for those days when you just can't exercise, or as a way for the non-exerciser to begin. Consider it a doorway to a fitter, healthier world.

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### About the Author

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