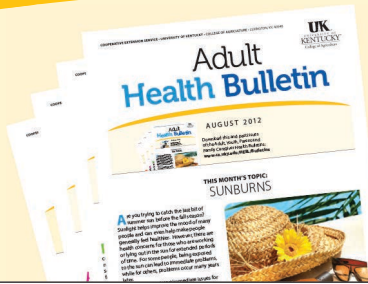


Adult Health Bulletin



FEBRUARY 2014

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

STAYING ACTIVE WHILE STAYING INSIDE

When it is cold outside, you may have a hard time motivating yourself to get up and moving, especially if you have to leave your warm home. But the good news is that you do not have to leave your home to get a little exercise. There are many different ways you can use the items around your house to get your heart beating and warm you up.

Strength building activities

Keep your muscles working even if you do not have a set of weights. You can use many items around the home to act as weights.

To do a basic arm curl: start with the weight (or weighted object) in your hand; place your arm beside your body. You can place your elbow into your hip bone to stabilize it. Lift the weight slowly up in front of you and then slowly down in the same motion. Repeat 8-10 times on each side to start. You can add more weight or more repetition, as needed.

Some items that you can use as weights include:

- **Books:** Start with one or two books and add more as needed.
- **Canned goods:** Much like books, start with some canned goods to do arm exercises.
- **Plastic milk or juice jugs:** You can add different amounts of water to the jug to adjust the weight.
- **Various size bags:** You may use towels or clothes to adjust the weight of the bags that you have in your home.



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Body resistance exercises include pushups, crunches and wall sits.



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You can also use the weight of your own body as a way to work your muscles. These are called body resistance exercises and include:

- **Pushups:** Start by lying on the floor with your hands shoulder-width apart. Your feet should be straight out behind you from the hips. Tighten the center of your body. Keeping your elbows close to the body, slowly bend them until your chest reaches the ground or you are as low as you can go. Push back up.
- **Crunches:** Start with your back on the floor and your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Put your hands behind your head. Next, pull your chin down slightly and peel your head and shoulders off the floor. You should feel the center of your body tighten. Continue curling the shoulders and upper back off the floor. When you get to the top, hold for a moment, then lower your back toward the floor slowly. Repeat.
- **Wall sits:** With your back against a wall, slowly slide your back down until your thighs are parallel to the ground. You want to make sure your knees are directly above the ankles and that you keep your back nice and straight. Try for 45 seconds and then straighten your legs. Try to do once or twice. If that is too easy, add a little time.

Do you think that just because you cannot get outside to walk or run that you will not be able to get cardiovascular exercise? You can easily get your heart rate up by following this simple stair exercise: go up and down your steps for 5-8 minutes. To challenge yourself, take two steps at a time. You can also walk up the steps sideways using different leg muscles than are usually used to climb the steps. If you do not

have steps, you may use an object that you can step up on, such as a small stool.

Flexibility and stretching

You can stretch at any time, not just when you are sweating. Perhaps you are sitting and watching your favorite show on a cold night. This can be a great time to stretch. The best part about stretching is that you do not need any equipment.

Here are a few tips for stretching:

- **Do not bounce.** When you are stretching go for a slow, long stretch. Think about when you stretch after a good night of sleep. Do you move really fast while you are yawning?
- **If it hurts, do not do it.** While you are stretching, you might feel a little tightness, but you should never feel pain. If it hurts, you should stop.
- **Do both sides.** If you stretch one leg or arm, make sure you stretch the other side as well.

It is important to be safe when doing any type of activity. If you are using home items as exercise equipment, be sure you are doing so safely. Talk to your doctor if you are planning to start a new exercise program.

SOURCES:

- Mayo Clinic. (2011). Stretching: Focus on Flexibility <http://www.mayoclinic.org/stretching/ART-20047931>
- Extension.org (2012). Why is Weight lifting important for overall fitness? <http://www.extension.org/pages/19816/why-is-weight-lifting-important-for-overall-fitness#.UssdCPvWvOs>

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