

4.3 Hack Your Workout Routine

Plan your day-to-day life to squeeze in extra exercise.

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It's easy to get stuck in a workout rut. You do the same exercises every day or run the same distance, and before long, your performance starts to plateau. You could train longer or harder, but it may not be easy for you to find extra time in your schedule or the energy you need to push beyond your existing limits.

Even within tight time or energy constraints, however, there are various ways you can add physical movements to your day, thus improving your strength and stamina, clearing your mind, and boosting your vitality.

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- Packs more workout time into your schedule.
- Spreads the benefits of exercise throughout your day.
- Keeps exercise feeling fun and novel.

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- Like all exercise, it requires willpower to start and persist with a new routine.
- Filling spare moments with activity can become exhausting.

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Even if your days are quite busy, there's a good chance you can find ways to build more exercise into your schedule. Sometimes, this may be a case of substituting one activity for another—for example, replacing your desk with a standing one or a treadmill desk. Another option that falls into this category is walking or cycling to work instead of driving. At other times, it may involve using a few minutes of idle time to do something physical. You could install a pull-up bar in your doorframe, for example, and do a set of pull-ups when you break after a twenty-five-minute Pomodoro session (see Tool 1.4: The Pomodoro Technique).

There are countless ways to slip more activity into your day. When you go to the store, park at the opposite end of the street or the farthest corner of the parking lot and walk the difference. Pace while you're on the phone or during meetings. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. If you work on a high floor of an office building, you can turn this into a game, getting off the elevator one floor early, then two, then three, steadily increasing the distance you walk as your fitness improves. You can clear some room in your workspace and do a set of push-ups at regular intervals during the day—or play a favorite tune and dance.

Individually, these small shifts may seem insignificant, but their impact builds incrementally. If you make a habit of always choosing the more active option and make small additions to your exercise routine where possible, you will soon see the benefits begin to rack up.

