

SWAP Your Way to Health

How do we find the sweet spot and ensure that we get enough—but not too much—physical activity? The best way to accomplish this is by focusing on three elements that can be expressed in the acronym **SWAP: Stand, Walk, and Push**.

Stand

- Goal: Stand for about half of the day.
- Use a standing desk at work if possible.
- Take standing breaks. Stand up for at least two minutes every 30 to 45 minutes. Even short breaks like this can make a big difference. (They're great for relieving eyestrain too.)
- Try setting an alarm on your phone each time you come back from a break and sit down again, and do this until the break becomes second nature.
- Take a brief walk or do some light stretching.
- Stand up at long meetings. (If you're worried about what your colleagues might think, just tell them you have a bad back!)

Walk

- Goal: Walk 10,000 steps daily.
- Take walking meetings. If you have a meeting scheduled with someone in your office, why not suggest taking a walk while you do it?
- Use the stairs whenever possible. You might want to take the elevator if you work on the fiftieth floor of a building (at least some of the time), but do you really need to take it if you work on the third floor?
- Walk or bicycle to work. Get creative. If you live too far away to walk or ride exclusively, consider driving part of the way and walking or cycling for the remainder.
- Do your own chores. Rather than outsourcing cleaning, laundry, gardening, washing the car, and other household chores, do them yourself.
- Get a dog. Dogs need to be exercised regularly for optimal health, just like people. You might not be motivated to take a walk yourself, but if you have a dog, you're more likely to do it.
- Choose a hobby that requires physical activity. Ballroom dancing, bowling, and cooking are fun choices, but it's especially great to pick a hobby that gets you outdoors, like bird-watching, gardening, snorkeling, camping, or hunting.
- Extra credit: work at a treadmill desk!

Push

- Goal: Push it for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity, OR 30 minutes maximal or near-maximal activity each week.
- This includes:

- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week (like jogging, yoga, or dancing); or,
- 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity per week (like running, Zumba, or playing sports); or,
- 30 minutes of highest-intensity exercise per week (like sprinting, jumping rope, or resistance training)
- More than this may not be necessary unless you enjoy it or have specific performance goals.
- Be careful not to overtrain, which can worsen your health rather than improve it.