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Contact Info:

Julie Weisbrod, Healthy Communities Coordinator
Jackson County Health Department (Office: 517.768.1650)
Fax: 517.788.4373
JWeisbro@co.jackson.mi.us

May is National Health Awareness Month

Consider Household Chores, Exercising Throughout your Workday for a Healthier Life

JACKSON COUNTY, MI – May 1, 2019 - To help you live a longer, healthier life, you don't have to go to a gym to fit physical activity into your day. In recognition of May being National Health Awareness Month, Julie Weisbrod, Healthy Communities Coordinator at the Jackson County Health Department, suggests that you find imaginative ways to spur activity throughout your day.

According to a physical activity study, where 130,000 people of various income levels, residing throughout 17 countries, were studied between 2003 and 2010, researchers found that engaging in household chores can be just as effective as running or working out when it comes to extending your life (Science Daily, September 21, 2017). The study showed that participants enjoyed the same health benefits whether they were going to the gym, walking to work or doing household chores such as vacuuming, scrubbing the floor or gardening.

“Individuals performing 30 minutes of any kind of physical activity five days a week could help reduce a person’s risk to many health conditions”, states Ms. Weisbrod. “If you put enough physical effort into sweeping, raking, pushing the lawn mower, handwashing dishes, dusting, washing windows, making the bed, etc., you can increase your heart rate, breathing rate and strength, while burning calories. Even if these activities are done ten minutes at a time, over the course of the day, the minutes add up and provide the same benefit as having worked out at least 30 minutes all at once”, she states.

In addition, a Clemson University study of 1,500 older women found that those getting less than 40 minutes of exercise each day and sitting 10 or more hours each day, had cells that were eight biological years older than those of more active like-women (Science Daily, July 5, 2016). Not only is it physically

harmful, but too much sitting might also be damaging your brain. Researchers say that the more you move your body, the more alert your brain becomes (AARP, Healthy Living, Susan Mahoney).

If your workday confines you to being sedentary for most of the day, Ms. Weisbrod encourages you to “work in your workout. Throughout your day, engage in push-ups, chest presses, a working squat, chair dips, walk & talk meetings, stair climbing, leg lifts, lunges, sitting abdominal crunches, etc. If you’re able, use a stand-up desk, a cyclor, an exercise band, an exercise ball, free weights, etc. Just getting activity worked in throughout your day will likely make you feel more motivated, focused, fit, happy, etc.” Beyond physical health, the Clemson study notes that “improving positive affect could mean improved problem-solving, decision-making, responsibility and creativity, all important implications for the workplace” (AARP, Healthy Living, Susan Mahoney). For exercise ideas during the workday, see NanoWorkout.com

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