

5 Movement Snacks for Your Body and Mind

by Ryan McGowan, Personal Trainer

When people hear that I'm a personal trainer, the conversation goes one of two ways: I either get a detailed recap of their workout routine, or a litany of excuses why they can't exercise. In this issue, we address the most common excuse: lack of time.

As I mentioned in my last article, the cumulative effect of squeezing in 5 to 10-minute movement "snacks" can serve as well as full movement "meals" without the large time commitment. Taking regular breaks may also lead to increased productivity in the workplace. Many studies have shown this, whether the work:break ratio be 5:1, 10:1, or 52:17. So what should you do to maximize your snack time? I'm glad you asked! Here are some ideas for you:

Note: youtube.com is a great resource if you're unclear on how to do these movements. You could utilize some of your break time to research and practice these. Also, you don't have to get sweaty for it to count (just saying, and your colleagues may appreciate this).

Snack #1 – complete as many rounds as possible in 5-10 minutes of:

10 glute bridges (hips to the sky and squeeze your cheeks together)

10 squats (chest and eyes up)

10 pushups (keep elbows close to ribs and lower chest to the floor or desk, etc.)

Snack #2 – 3 to 5 rounds of:

10 lateral lunges or Cossack squats

10 tripod transitions (one of my favorite movnat techniques)

10 pushups (vary hand position)

Snack #3 – gymnastics-themed core work for 4-8 minutes of:

“Arch hold” for 20 seconds, rest 10 seconds, “hollow hold” for 20 seconds, rest 10 seconds, “arch hold” for 20 seconds...for 4-8 minutes

Snack #4 – take the stairs, do 5-10 pushups at the top, do 10 glute bridges or lateral lunges at the bottom, repeat for 5-10 minutes.

Snack #5 – check out animal flow on youtube and practice the “crab reach.” This is a great move to offset all the sitting many of us do throughout the day.

So, if you could do these snacks without losing or perhaps gaining productivity, why wouldn't you do it? Although it's not easy, committing to your body and having the discipline to honor that commitment is always worth it! Not to mention the side benefits this routine would have on your practice, your relationships, and general "life momentum!"

(Note #2: if this isn't feasible, try getting out of bed 30 minutes earlier than normal and "snack" for 20 minutes; bonus points for jumping in a cool or cold shower afterwards!)