Exercise Snacks

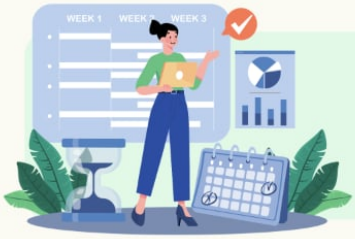
MOVE A LITTLE MOVE OFTEN

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS' GUIDE TO INTRODUCING EXERCISE SNACKS INTO EVERYDAY LIFE

What are exercise snacks?



Exercise snacks are a **simple strategy** to **introduce physical activity** and **interrupt prolonged sedentary behaviour**. Research suggests that this approach is **feasible** across **multiple populations** (1-2-3) and may provide **cardiometabolic benefits** (4-5-6). These could include **sit-to-stands**, **stair climbing**, **jumping jacks**, **marching in place**, and more! If you think exercise snacks could be appropriate for your patient, **consider the following steps**:



Initiate the conversation

- Ask **permission to discuss physical activity**: *"Would it be okay if we talked about your physical activity?"* (7)
- Explore **current activity levels**, **sedentary behaviour**, **preferences**, **barriers**, and **opportunities for movement**.

Build into your daily Routine



Try **pairing exercise snacks** with **daily activities**:

- After brushing your teeth.
- Before or after a meal.
- During television commercial breaks.
- Before sitting down to work.



Exercise prescription

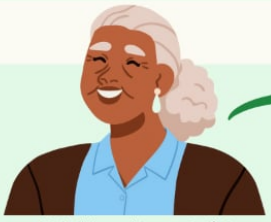
Use the **FITT principle** to guide your prescription
Frequency: Several short bouts throughout the day; **Intensity**: Aim for vigorous intensity when appropriate (≥7/10 on the perceived exertion scale); **Time**: Start with approximately 1-minute bouts; **Type**: Select accessible exercises adapted to the patient's preferences and functional capacity.

Individualize and progress



Start at a **manageable intensity** and **progressively increase effort**. Consider **functional limitations**, **comorbidities**, **cardiovascular risk**, and **relevant medication use**. Assess safety and **potential contraindications** before recommending **vigorous-intensity activity**.

Putting it into practice



Suzanne, **68**, is living with t**ype 2 diabetes** and wants to **improve her glucose regulation** and **upper-body muscular endurance**.

Suggested approach:
Start with **4 × 1-minute exercise snacks** throughout the day

- **After breakfast**: 60 seconds of sit-to-stands.
- **After lunch**: 60 seconds of marching in place.
- **After dinner**: 60 seconds of step-ups.
- **During TV commercials**: 25 wall push-ups.

The goal: Make movement a regular part of everyday life. Short bouts add up!