



Why Take the Stairs?

Fitting physical activity into a busy lifestyle can be a challenge. Taking the stairs is a simple way to add more physical activity into your day and can significantly contribute to the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity per day.

Not only does stair climbing help individuals manage their weight by burning calories, it can also help reduce the risks associated with heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases.

Taking the stairs can:

- **Improve your heart health.** It can help raise the levels of good cholesterol in the blood.
- **Help you achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.** Taking the stairs burns twice the amount of calories as walking. Taking 6 flights of stairs per day can accumulate to 18 lbs. of weight loss over a span of a year.
- **Contribute to building and maintaining healthy bones.** It can enhance bone density and assist in the prevention of osteoporosis.
- **Help you build and maintain healthy joints and muscles.** People who frequently take the stairs have greater leg strength in comparison to non-climbers.
- **Help you breathe better and have a higher aerobic capacity.** Taking 3-4 flights of stairs at a moderate pace utilizes your heart and lungs similar to a 10 minute walk.
- **Reduce stress and tension.** When you take the stairs, you release endorphins that help relieve stress and other negative feelings.

Improve Your Overall Health One Step at a Time... Take the Stairs Today!

If you are unable to take the stairs. Look for other opportunities to add more physical activity into your day.

Stair Climbing Safety Tips

Individuals with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or arthritis should consult with their physician to determine a safe activity level.

The following are some tips:

- Set an achievable goal and progress slowly. For example start with 5 minutes two times per day and increase by 1 minute each time.
- Listen to your body. Stop climbing the stairs if you experience any sharp pains.
- Take your time and watch each step you take.
- Remember to breathe. Ensure steady breathing to maximize your oxygen supply to your muscles.
- Hold onto the handrail if you need support. Do not use the handrail to pull yourself up as this may lead to wrist or arm injury.
- Maintain a straight posture to avoid strain to your lower back.
- Be aware of your knee alignment as it can cause a knee or ankle sprain.
- Watch for opening doors at the end of the stairway.
- Stay hydrated. Drink some water before, during, and after climbing the stairs.

Source: <https://healthy.iu.edu>

Resources Consulted

The following websites were consulted to develop the “Take the Stairs Initiative”:

- <http://www.nyu.edu>
- <http://carleton.ca>
- <http://www.cdc.gov>
- <https://hr.gwu.edu>
- <http://www.toronto.ca>
- <https://www.alpineascents.com>
- <http://www.miottawa.org>
- <http://www.cdc.gov>
- <http://wellness.ucr.edu>
- <http://www.projecthealth.ca>