

Turn chores into a fitness routine

April 18 2018



(HealthDay)—Is the "e" word—*exercise*—a downer for you?

If so, you need look no further than everyday chores to find new ways to

ramp up your workout level and burn more [calories](#).

Remember, if you're moving you're burning calories—and the movement doesn't have to be on a treadmill or even in a gym. In fact, one eight-year study found that people got the same [health benefits](#) whether they went to the gym, walked to work or did household chores.

The benefit, of course, depends somewhat on the chores you're tackling. Some are more labor intensive than others, so you can burn the same number of calories in a shorter time. For instance, you'd need to wash windows, floors or your car for 45 to 60 minutes to get the same effect as 30 minutes of raking leaves and just 15 minutes of shoveling snow.

In general, though, you can burn up to 250 calories an hour doing housework, and even more gardening or snow shoveling.

House cleaning comes with another benefit: You'll exercise all major muscle groups. There's walking, stretching, bending and lifting involved when you're making beds, vacuuming, putting away dishes, washing windows and taking out the trash.

If you've been inactive, though, start slowly—even with chores. Physical activity is [physical activity](#), so make sure your doctor is onboard with any new fitness program.

Start with light activities like dusting, ironing and cooking. Then move to the moderate ones like general housecleaning, stacking wood in the garage and gardening. If you aren't yet aerobically fit, stay away from a strenuous activity like shoveling snow, which can carry heart risks.

Women can expect to burn about 240 calories an hour with light activity. For men, it's 300 calories. Moderate activity burns about 50 percent more.

The bottom line? Even if you don't break a sweat from chores, the more you move, the more effectively you counter the health negatives of too much sitting at home and at work.

More information: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers [Be Active Your Way](#), a guide for adults who want to be physically active.

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Citation: Turn chores into a fitness routine (2018, April 18) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-04-chores-routine.html>

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