

15 Minutes Around the House

No time for exercise?
You might be surprised

The nation's couch potatoes have been waiting for this study for years, and they finally got it. In the July 12 issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, National Institutes of Health researchers reported that active older adults live longer than those who are not active, but—and here's the shocker—it doesn't much matter whether you clean your house or go to the gym.

The study of 302 adults ages 70 to 82 measured the energy expended from normal day-to-day activities such as climbing stairs, working, and vacuuming. What they found was that those who expended the most energy through daily activities had a 30 percent lower risk of dying during the study period of about six years than those who expended the least energy.

That doesn't get you off the exercise hook entirely. But it does mean you can stop beating yourself up for not following a formal exercise program and take credit for all the other ways you're active: running around after the children, volunteering, and, during this most hectic of holiday seasons, shopping, baking cookies, and wrapping gifts. "You don't have to do a marathon; you just need to try to incorporate good daily activity into your life," says Sandra Selikson, M.D., assistant professor of medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine's Montefiore Medical Center in New York City.

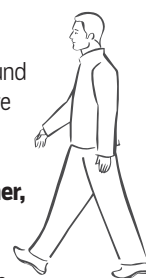
If, after getting your holiday chores done, you have 15 minutes more to spare, try this fast fitness regimen. The best part? You don't even have to leave the house.

Express Train

Cardio workout

7 minutes

The *JAMA* study found that those who were the most active climbed at least 2 flights of stairs a day. If you're a **beginner**, try to climb up and down the stairs for 1 minute, then rest for 1 minute; repeat. If you're in **moderate** shape, climb for 2 minutes, rest for 1, climb for 2 more, rest for 1, and climb for 1. No stairs? Walk briskly for 7 minutes.



Strength training

6 minutes

Perform 2 sets of 8 to 10 repetitions of each of the following exercises while holding a full 1-liter milk jug or soup can in each hand. Do each exercise to a count of 6: 3 seconds up, 3 seconds down.

Shoulder press Starting with the weights by your shoulders, slowly raise your arms until they're fully extended, keeping elbows pointed out. Lower weights to shoulders. Repeat.

Biceps curl Starting with your arms by your sides, palms facing forward, bend each arm at the elbow; bring the weight toward the front of your shoulders, then lower.

Lateral raise Starting with your arms by your sides, raise your arms away from your sides until your body forms a T. Lower.



Stretching/flexibility

2 minutes

Whole-body extension Lie on your back, with your arms on the floor beyond your head and your legs straight out. Point your fingers and toes to lengthen your body, then relax. Repeat 5 times.

Child's pose Sit on the floor with your knees bent, your backside on your heels. Lower your chest to your knees and then your head to the floor. Place your hands, palms up, by your feet. Hold for 30 seconds.

Back/hip stretch Lie on your back and bring both knees to your chest.

Grab your knees and hold the stretch for 30 seconds, then relax. □



Fitness routine provided by professional coach Don Nava, author of *Fit After 40* (Nelson Books, 2006).