



MAY 2014

HEALTHYROADS®

NEWSLETTER

01

Wellness and Healthy Living

Active Commuting

It's a paradox: You don't have much time to be active because you're always on the go. The problem is that so much of that "running" is done while sitting. What if you could get some exercise while also getting where you need to go? Maybe it's time to park the car and try powering your commute the old-fashioned way—by putting your body to work.

Studies show that people who walk or bike to work regularly tend to be fitter than their car-bound peers. In fact, active commuters are at lower risk for obesity, stress, and heart disease. And the gains go beyond health. Active commuting also means using less fuel. That's less expense for you and less pollution for the planet.

Commute distances can differ a lot. But whether your trip is long or short, you can turn going there into a fitness opportunity. Here are some ways:

- * **Take a hike.** If you don't have too much to carry and you're not too pressed for time, try walking or even jogging. Going on foot can be a good option for nearby errands.
- * **Take a bike.** Check with coworkers or look on the Web for information about safe bike paths along your commute. You might even be able to find a group you can join. If your commute is too long or hilly to bike, check into electric bicycles. They give you the choice of using electric power when you're too pooped to pedal.

* **Take a train ... or bus.** Taking buses and trains may not sound like "active" commuting. But people who use public transportation do much more walking and standing than those who go by car.

* **Take your pick.** If it simply isn't practical to get where you're going without the aid of a car, think of ways to work active commuting into your journey. For example, you might park a mile from your destination and walk the rest of the way. Or you might ride a bike part of the way and hop a trolley or a bus for the final leg. Be creative!

You might be worried about working up a sweat, especially on warmer days. Is showering an option? If not, you can do a respectable job of freshening up in the restroom. Some baby wipes (or water and paper towels) and perhaps a change of underwear and socks might be all you need. Try a dry shampoo to rid your hair of sweat and oil quickly (spray on, brush out). To be sure, the restroom method is just a short-term measure, but it can keep you socially acceptable until real bathing is available again.

Of course, leaving your car behind, even for a block or two, can seem like a scary move. But once you've tasted the fresh air and felt the vigor of active commuting, you may become a convert. Even 10 to 15 minutes of extra walking a couple of times a day can boost your fitness, lower your risk for disease, and lift your mood.

Welcome to HEALTHYROADS!

In this monthly newsletter, you'll find a collection of articles on popular health and wellness topics. If you'd like additional support in your quest to lose weight, improve nutrition, develop an exercise plan, reduce stress, or quit smoking, visit us online at magellanhealth.com/member. There you can find a collection of articles, tips, tools, and trackers to help you reach your health goals.



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to see it all today!



02

Diet and Exercise Finish Your First 5K!

A 5K race is like a crazy traveling party. People jog, stroll, sample refreshments, pose for photos, and even wear costumes. And they do it all while covering 5 kilometers, or 3.1 miles. Have you ever longed to be part of the celebration? If you're not a runner, you may wonder whether you belong at a "running" event. Be assured: These days, everyone is invited to the party! Any pace goes, and walkers are most certainly welcome. So sign up for a race, log some steps, and come join the fun!

NOTE: Before you begin training for a 5K, consult your doctor to make sure training is safe for you.

Get ready ...

Nothing says commitment like signing up for a race. Search online or check your city's weekly reader for upcoming events near you. Target one that is at least a couple of months away. Note that some 5K events have course time limits. Be sure to find one that will allow you to finish at your intended pace.

Next, find a training plan that's right for you. A few things you should think about are your current fitness level, your goals for the 5K, and how much time you have to train. Even if you intend to walk the full distance, choose a plan that allows you at least 8 weeks to prepare.

Get set ...

Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you train for the big day:

- * Forget about speed. Just focus on going the distances that your plan calls for.
- * Always warm up. Start with 5 to 10 minutes of walking or easy jogging.

- * Breathe naturally and comfortably. If you feel out of breath, ease up.
- * Take rest days, and avoid training when you're injured or sick.
- * Carry identification. It's also a good idea to carry a cell phone.
- * Avoid training outdoors in extreme heat or cold.
- * Cool down after every workout by walking or jogging slowly for several minutes.

Go!

Here are some final things to keep in mind on the day of the 5K race:

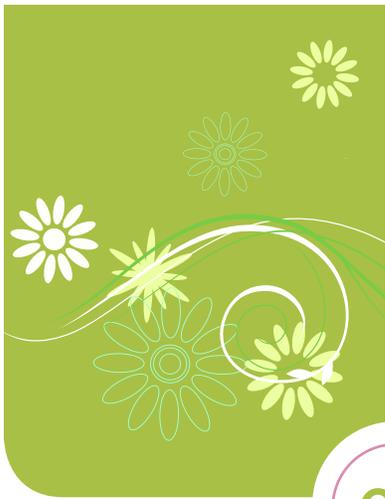
- * Arrive early and check in. Put on your race number and timing chip as instructed.
- * Warm up and shake off any pre-race nerves you might feel.
- * When you head for the starting line, keep in mind that faster runners usually start near the front, and slower joggers and walkers start further back.
- * You can do this! Remember your training, and enjoy the experience!
- * Be sure to cool down and stretch any tight muscles when the race is over.

One final tip: Celebrate! For most participants, finishing a 5K is not about time goals or even about receiving a finisher's medal. It's about participation and personal achievement. Be proud of your accomplishment. And don't forget to smile for the camera when you cross the finish line!

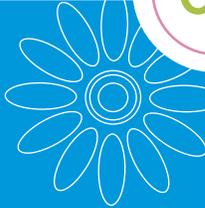


HEALTH TIP:

Are you thinking of trying a 5K? Invite someone to sign up with you! Taking part in a 5K can be even more fun with a friend. And training with someone can make the miles more enjoyable.



03



Quitting Smoking Integrative Body-Mind Training Trims Cigarette Cravings

Anyone trying to quit smoking will tell you: The cravings make it a hard habit to kick. A smoker may be totally ready to quit, but sometimes the cravings are just too strong. It's not a pleasant feeling to experience a craving that strong without acting on it.

What's the key to managing cravings then? One of the standard methods has been to avoid things that cause cravings in the first place. Another is to find something to help take your mind off the cravings. But what if those cravings are triggered by things you can't avoid? What if your daily commute triggers you to light up? Or what if you crave a cigarette every time you finish a meal? You can't very well avoid driving to work or eating meals.

So researchers are looking into other options. Past studies have shown that a type of meditation known as integrative body-mind training (IBMT) has helped people battle drug and alcohol addictions. IBMT involves relaxing the whole body and remaining "focused on the present moment."

This type of meditation has been shown to reduce stress and improve self-control. Researchers wanted to see if it could work with nicotine addiction as well. Nicotine addiction works like other types of addictions: It disrupts pathways in the brain that are linked to self-control. So why not see what effect it could have with smokers?

Researchers put together an IBMT study to see what they could find out. And the results looked promising. After a 2-week period, class participants had cut back on smoking by 60 percent. But the subjects had no idea it was a smoking cessation study. By taking this approach, researchers could study the behaviors of smokers who were not necessarily trying to quit. As it

turns out, the smokers in the group had cut back on smoking without consciously trying to do so.

IBMT is thought to be effective because rather than battle their cravings, smokers learn to improve self-control. With improved self-control, smokers are better suited to cope with cravings. It's thought that by being aware of cravings, a smoker can experience them without actually acting on them.

The idea is that you'll realize you want a cigarette, but you don't feel compelled to light one up. Researchers think it may be an unconscious change in behavior. This is thought to be the reason why some of the participants smoked less without even being aware of it.

In one study, researchers took brain scans of smokers before and after the training periods. Before IBMT, the scans showed impairment in parts of the brain that affect self-control. After 2 weeks of IBMT sessions, scans showed improved activity in these parts of the brain.

Because IBMT focuses on parts of the brain that regulate self-control, there are some positive side effects, too. One pleasant side effect is that it can help you better cope with stress, which is a big reason why many people smoke in the first place.

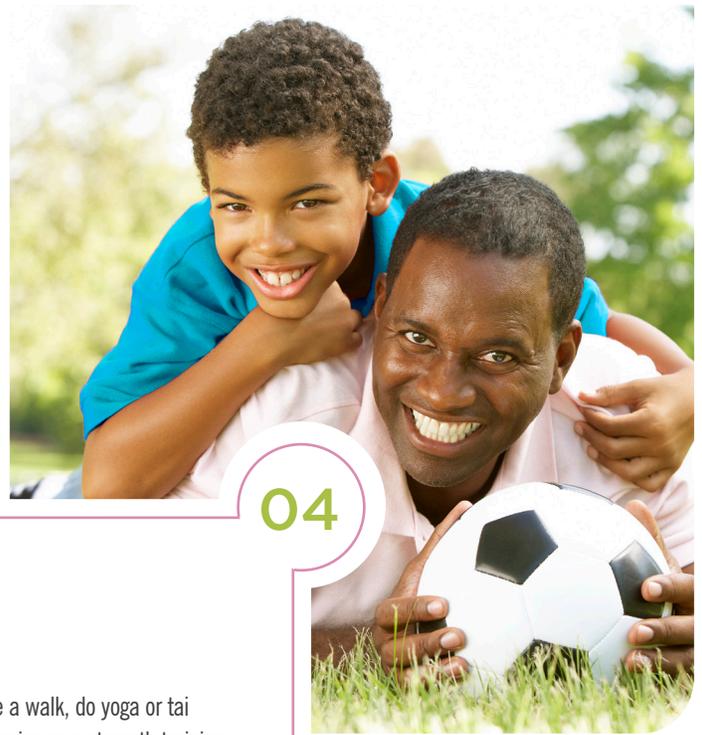
Although researchers are optimistic about IBMT, they noted that more research is needed. So far the class sizes have been somewhat small. Another limitation is that this type of training requires a teacher. At this time, self-taught programs are not yet available.

To get started on the road to being tobacco free, visit Magellanhealth.com/member. There, you'll find quit-smoking classes, videos, and other tools that can help you leave tobacco behind.

SERIOUS ABOUT QUITTING?

We at Healthyroads understand the challenges of quitting smoking. That's why we offer a variety of online tools and articles to help you quit—once and for all. Our Web-based personal health plans, tools, trackers, and articles give you every chance to succeed. For anyone considering quitting smoking, take the first step and visit magellanhealth.com/member.





04

Low-Stress Living Less Worry, More Happy

What do you think about throughout the day? Do you find yourself caught up with your problems to the point that they cause you worry and anxiety? If this happens often, worry may be keeping you from living a happy life.

Obsessing on problems can lead to:

- * Lost sleep
- * Heart health issues
- * Higher risk for disease

Maybe it's time to stop mulling the past, the future, and those things you don't have control over. So how do you let go of worry day to day? It's not easy to do. You can't just decide not to worry. But you can take steps to lessen the hold that worry has on you.

Here are a few ideas:

- * **Schedule relaxing activities.** You can do this whether or not you feel stressed at the moment. Plan for regular times to watch movies, read, get together with friends, or whatever relaxes you.
- * **Try stress-reducing exercises.** If worry is taking over your thought life, turn to a proven relaxation method. Just a few minutes may help you clear your mind. Some of these are listed below. If you're not familiar with these techniques, you can learn more from books or from browsing the Web.
 - » Belly breathing
 - » Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
 - » Imagery

- * **Move for 30 minutes.** Take a walk, do yoga or tai chi, or enjoy a stretching session or a strength training workout. Adding a social aspect to your workout may give you an even bigger boost. You may want to walk with a friend, hike with your dog, or take a class at a community center or gym.
- * **Tackle problems head on.** Make a list of what is bothering you. Prioritize what you want to deal with and what can wait.
- * **Talk about your worries.** Talk out your concerns with friends or family. If your troubles are causing you to lose sleep, feel anxious, or turn to alcohol, you may want to talk to a trained counselor.

Forgetting past events or present troubles is not the goal. But you can work on changing your focus, at least for a while. Remind yourself that you can't change the past. You don't know what will happen in the future. But it's definitely a good idea to look at the good in the present and allow yourself to be happy. The more often you can live in the moment, the more likely you are to enjoy life to the fullest.

Healthyroads can help you become more mindful and less stressed. Visit Magellanhealth.com/member today for audio lessons in various relaxation techniques.

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