

Denise Austin's 10 Tips For a Fitter, Healthier Life

- Take inventory. Test your walking and fitness ability by seeing how fast you can walk a mile. Whether you go to the track, hit the treadmill or set out in your own neighborhood, I always encourage people to try to see if they can see a 15 minute mile. This will help them gauge their initial fitness ability and how much they need to improve.
- Incorporate a pedometer. A pedometer is a great way to stay aware of the number of steps you are taking every day. Most people overestimate how many steps they take on an average day so wearing a pedometer will encourage you to get moving!
- Little steps do matter. Standing burns twice as many calories as sitting. If you sit often, get off of your chair as much as possible to increase circulation and the number of calories you burn. Food is not the enemy. Sitting still is the enemy.
- Pump your arms. A great way to make your workout count is to pump your arms. Pumping your arms while walking or running increases the number of muscles you are using, toning your arms and burning more calories.
- Interval training. Strap on a heart rate monitor to guide you to know what zone you are in while exercising (they range from barely taxing to extremely taxing). By alternating a low intensity pace with bursts of high intensity, you will burn more calories and challenge your cardiovascular system – leading to a healthier heart. An effective workout can be 30 minutes of alternating 3 minutes of walking with 2 minutes of jogging.
- Stretching is important. Always make sure to stretch after exercising to help repair muscles and especially focus on your lower back. You can do this by standing up, keeping your feet hip width apart and grabbing the back of your thighs and rounding your back like a C.
- Your spine is your lifeline – keep it healthy, keep it strong so you can keep going. One of the best ways to do this is by strengthening your abs. You must reeducate your abdominal muscles by pulling them in and contracting them all day long.
- Make it work. Finding the time for exercise can be difficult. A great way to sneak in a workout when you least expect it is through isometrics. Whether you are trying to tighten your abs, your tush or any of the other 600 plus muscles in your body, contracting any muscle for 5 seconds and releasing it is a great way to tighten and tone.
- Keep moving. Increasing circulation and keeping your body moving is important for your metabolism. Walking around for one minute in between activities during the day improves circulation instantly and is very conducive to healing the body. In addition, your energy levels will improve drastically.
- Finally, music is my motivator and one of the things that keeps me going like the *Energizer Bunny*®. Working out with music is scientifically proven to help people workout harder and longer. So grab your mp3 player and put some great tunes on to help make the most out of your workout.