



# Newsletter

"[If physical activity is a priority to you], you can always find time to do it." *Female, late 20's*

## Choose to Move – Lots of Reasons

Physical activity includes walking, riding a bicycle, gardening, or shovelling snow – to name just a few examples. Whatever you choose, just move! Below are some of the many benefits to being physically active – your way, every day.

Daily physical activity . . .

- \* increases physical fitness and flexibility
- \* helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- \* builds endurance and muscular strength
- \* helps manage weight
- \* lowers risk factors for cardiovascular disease, certain cancers & type 2 diabetes
- \* helps relieve stress and improve mood
- \* helps control blood pressure
- \* promotes psychological well-being and self-esteem
- \* reduces feelings of depression and anxiety
- \* improves blood circulation
- \* improves energy level
- \* improves balance and coordination
- \* enhances immune function

---

**Here are some words of wisdom collected through the narrative research component of WIN the Rockies.**

"As we get older, the importance of trying to maintain . . . physical conditioning is probably a basic health insurance.

*Male in his 30's*

*Reactions after recently starting physical activity program*—"Well at first it was total exhaustion. Now it's actually invigorating. It gives me energy. . . . I certainly never thought I would get to almost enjoying it. I never expected to do that. I just figured I'd trudge along and we'd set our goals. . . . I just didn't ever think I would enjoy it."

*Female in her 30's*

"I've grown to appreciate [physical activity] more, not only for what it does for the body, but kind of what it does for the sense of well-being. You just have more peace."

*Male, early 30's*

"I work in accounting, so if the numbers just won't equal what I think they should equal sometimes I just get up and walk away from it. . . . And I'm *fortunate* that I work next to a park, so we can get up and go walk around the block. . . . And it's just *amazing* how you get up and move and get away from it, and come back and it's like, 'Oh, well duh, there's a mistake.' "

*Female, early 40's*

"I feel good that I've [walked on the treadmill]. When I finish, I just physically feel better. Boy I feel like I could get up and really get something done, where I might have been dragging before I started. It energizes me. That's a good word. It energizes me."  
*Female, 50ish*

"That . . . regimented kind of physical activity, I'd rather have my physical activity actually accomplishing something . . . sheet rocking, carpentry, . . . stacking hay bales, that kind of work as opposed to going to the gym and pumping iron. . . . I think that is why the [exercise] machine is sitting there inactive."  
*Male, mid 50's*



*What got you started walking?* "When you go to the doctor's office and you fill out that family history, that can be pretty much a good indicator that you better start changing. . . . The doctors usually roll their eyes at me. . . . I mean, mother's side of the family — high blood pressure, diabetes, heart problems, you name it, [it's] pretty much there. On my father's side, three different types of cancers, cholesterol problems. . . . I've lost both my parents and I'm [only in my 40's]. Siblings are starting to run into serious health problems, but definitely [I've gained an] . . . awareness . . . of [mortality]. But it's a little bit different when the seriousness of health hits your *siblings* . . . instead of someone that's removed from you."  
*Female, early 40's*

"One thing I notice is when I was physically active all the time, I slept so much better."  
*Male, 70's to 80's*

"With exercise, there's many things that it can help overcome physically, emotionally and mentally. It's a good tool to use to balance your life. . . . Someone can withstand the challenges they face, and [they] may not have the illnesses they would otherwise have if they didn't take better care of themselves."  
*Female in her 30's*

"I can be depressed or down, especially since my husband died, and a couple of times I've talked myself into just getting up and going out and going for a walk. And I do that, and I come back, and I have a whole different outlook. I'm fine! I've lost the depression, or loneliness, or whatever it is. . . . Just get off the couch and get outside and get out the door."  
*Female in her 60's*



Source for quotations: Holmes, Betty, Suzanne Pelican and Fred Vanden Heede. *Let their voices be heard: Quotations from life stories related to physical activity, food and eating, and body image*. Laramie, Wyoming: Wellness IN the Rockies, University of Wyoming, 2004. (Used with permission.)



WIN the Rockies is a community-based research, intervention and outreach project to improve health of residents in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Supported by award 0004499 through IFAFS (Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems) Competitive Grants Program/USDA. The University of Wyoming and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperate. The University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.  
[www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies](http://www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies) 1111