



# FitHapp=ns

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## On Multi-tasking and Wellness

There are purists in every discipline. These are folks who believe you have to have 110% of absolute mental and emotional involvement in everything you pursue that's important to you: religion, work, family, sports, whatever. These people do not believe in the possibility of doing things half-buttocked (yes, not a word according to MS Office, but I'm trying to stay above the fray here.) When it comes to getting fit, they don't believe you can *not* focus, *not* commit, *not* be totally involved. Hence you are either fit...or not. Kinda like being a patriot – either you're with us or against us – with no room to be both with us and against us. Kinda like, well, like the Taliban. Oops....

The reality is, fitness and its complements, wellness and health, operate along a spectrum: you can be more or less fit. Furthermore, you can be fit in some areas and not fit in others, making it possible to be both fit and un-fit. Thus, you can be strong but not powerful, powerful but not durable, fast but not agile, slow AND healthy. Too often, too much emphasis is placed on being at the top of the spectrum of one or more components of fitness rather than simply being on the trajectory of any of the components. In other words, some fitness pros debase and berate those folks who are doing, but not enough to get, let alone see, results. I often attribute this to the overwhelming importance placed on appearances in our culture, where 'appearances' means body shape/size (no, this is not another pro-body shape/size essay where I justify each person's particular level of conditioning or lack thereof - read on.) However, I do think it's important to realize and accept and, more so, praise effort rather than results, and re-calibrate results accordingly.

Fitness, wellness, and health are not ideals to be achieved, but standards to strive toward within the context of one's natural and temporal abilities. As such, you may walk in the park with dog or spouse, or teenagers if you really like self-abuse (that's a joke; c'mon, smile a little), and watch the joggers sweep past you with those looks of pure glory and peace, and still be proud of your fitness. You can mow your own lawn, or plant your own garden, and still take joy in your body's ability to give life and beauty to the world. And you can still read a book or watch TV and improve your heart's ability to sustain you for life all while cycling on a stationary bike. Ultimately, though, you can mix and match activities and get fit and healthy. The one thing that science is beginning to grasp is the reality that there is one thing you simply cannot do in excess and expect to get fit, well, or healthy: *be inactive*. Read on to get the inside scoop on the new science of wellness.





## The Science of Sedentary Behavior

It's in the news, and you knew it already: sitting around watching TV – or computers – is bad for your health. What you may not have heard, or don't want to hear, is that even after you've done your training session here or elsewhere, no matter how many calories you burned, how many muscles you stressed, what you do throughout the rest of your day affects your risk of morbidity (illness) and mortality (dying).

There are many reasons to not watch TV, and maybe more to not spend too much time on your computer: mindless entertainment, false information, aggravating reality all comes to mind. But a large study in Australia demonstrated that markers of cardiometabolic risk such as those that contribute to metabolic syndrome (sort of pre-diabetes) are more prevalent in those who watch 4 or more hours of TV/day. Let's repeat that for emphasis: after reading this newsletter, you'll have 3.5 hours or so left of your allotted sit-and-watch time remaining, after which your risk for heart disease and/or diabetes increases. And that's not even mentioning waist dimensions which also increases from TV time. What's most distressing, though, is that these associations are independent of baseline physical activity levels, changes in activity levels, and other potential lifestyle variables that could also affect risk profiles.

The researchers of the AusDiab Study also examined the risk profiles of those subjects who reportedly did at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity exercise/wk. Again, a positive correlation between TV time and waist circumference, high blood pressure, and poor blood sugar control remained. This relationship has been titled "The active couch potato".

Now, here's the worst part of this issue: TV time is an abbreviation for sitting. Thus, it includes driving in your car, sitting at work, meals, or movie theaters, and all other times you are sitting still! The cumulative data demonstrates that even if you are physically active and lean via regular concentrated periods of physical activity – e.g. exercise sessions – if you sit for long periods of time, an alternative universe of metabolic consequences will struggle for dominion over your body's well-being. More in-depth study of this issue has shown that, for people whose daily lives involve very brief periods of very low intensity but frequent bursts of activity – getting up to get your own beer while the Titans play - it's not about the intensity per se nor the concentration within small blocks of time that protect your health. It's about movement. Not sitting still. Not being sedentary for too long.

In other words, stop reading this, get up, move around, stretch your arms in the doorway, and bend over to get your own beer... uh, your own apple.





## Homeostasis: The process by which our bodies stay as they are

There's a tendency, noted by Isaac Newton, for bodies to remain at rest or in a particular motion until some force acts upon it. This is called 'inertia'. Thus, our bodies have multiple mechanisms to ensure a version of status quo whereby anything that disturbs said status quo is countered by some activity, sub-cellular or whole body, to restore said status quo. For example, get too cold, you shiver; too hot, you perspire; too hungry, you eat. But too satiated on food, well, for some reason we simply don't stop eating. The mechanism behind appetite control is important to all who have tried to lose weight, but it's also important for health reasons. If excess weight comes from eating excess calories, one would expect the body to eventually cease or at least desist from eating more calories. For some reason, it doesn't. In fact, some studies suggest that over-fatness, especially obesity, may interfere with the neuro-chemical (brain-hormone) signals that send messages of satiety or of the need for activity. Science is exploring this to figure out what, if anything, can be done to help people control their food intake.

In normal appetite management there are many mechanisms at work to enable us to maintain homeostasis. But why is it that we humans can still have dessert or even an after-dinner drink despite our fullness? This is what some are studying in order to find that perfect combination of macronutrients that both satisfies hunger and enables, if not facilitates, activity. But ultimately, we can't wait for science and medicine to figure it all out and get us a pill. The problem is here and now, and only getting more challenging, and costly. Homeostasis or not, it's time to halt the inertia.

### **And now let's do the numbers**

**2.2**

Percentage of Americans who use exercise equipment.

**5**

Percentage of Americans who exercise vigorously

-- *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

**3-14**

Months of life gained by switching from car to bicycle for short trips.

-- compared to --

**0.8-40**

Days of life lost due to pollution.

-- *Environmental Health Perspectives*

S.T.E.P.S., Inc  
2424 21st. Avenue South, Suite 100  
Nashville, TN 37212  
Phone: 615-269-8844  
Fax: 615-269-7068  
Email: [stepsfitness@gmail.com](mailto:stepsfitness@gmail.com)

[www.stepsfitness.com](http://www.stepsfitness.com)

[drirvsfitnessfax.blogspot.com](http://drirvsfitnessfax.blogspot.com)

## STEPS Fitness Menu

**Solo Training:** Traditional one-hour sessions of cardio, strength, stability, and flexibility. **12 sessions..... \$730**

**Solo + Power Plate Training:** one-hour sessions that incorporate Whole Body Vibration and other technologies to enhance bone density, muscle strength, power, agility, and balance. **12 sessions..... \$790**

**Half Time:** Utilizing our equipment, you take care of the cardio for 30-45 minutes, and work with your trainer for 30 minutes on strength, stability, and flexibility. **15 sessions..... \$670**

**Duet:** You and a friend for one hour with your trainer. **12 sessions..... \$890**

**Biometrics:** A successful program for long-term weight management balancing healthy eating with strength training. The 6-week program includes initial assessment, menu plan, 19 training sessions, and 2 month cardio membership. **\$1325**

\* Initial consultation required for all new clients (\$95)