



A Weekly Bulletin for "Choose a PATH to Wellness"

**Week 3
Action**

Vibrant

TEXAS ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES
HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POOL



Together. Better. Stronger.

An Olympic Challenge

Mission Three

CHOOSE ACTION

Choose to move at a time when you normal would be sedentary.

"Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees the others." – Aristotle

When filming a scene in a movie, the director yells, "Action!" and this is the cue for the camera to roll. When the actors either complete the scene or don't live up to production standards, the director yells, "Cut!" Over and over, the director gives her "Action!" command, hopes for the best, and then, ultimately, yells, "Cut!" Each take gets better and better, until finally she is satisfied and shouts, "It's a Wrap!"

Every day, we get to direct our own real-life story and can start the day yelling "Action!" Some days we will be more successful than others for achieving a healthy, active lifestyle. Some days we'll choose activity over inactivity; some days we'll get frustrated and yell, "Cut!"

Each day, however, we get to try again. And after much rehearsal and practice, the "Action!" lasts longer and we start to finish days with a hardy and successful "That's a Wrap!"

It takes courage to make change and, as Aristotle teaches us, it is in the result of this courage where we will be rewarded with a lifetime of health vigor. By taking the first step and yelling, "Action!", we open up the possibility of achieving many individual physical goals, whether it be weight loss, lowering cholesterol, reducing our chances

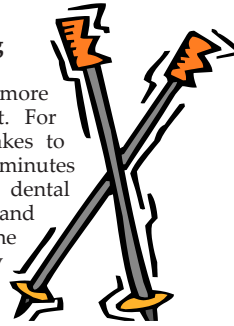
of osteoporosis or stroke, sleeping better, or lowering blood pressure.

No movie scene ever looked perfect after only one take. If the actors decided to stop performing just because the director yelled "Cut!" a few times, then there'd be precious few movies!

So, to help you create a successful day of *Activity* versus inactivity, here is a list of fun and inventive ideas. OK, directors, it's time: "Action!"

6 a.m.: Tooth Brushing Heel Raises:

Stand with feet a little more than hip distance apart. For the length of time it takes to brush your teeth (2 minutes is recommended by dental hygienists), slowly raise and lower your heels off the floor. This is a great way to sculpt and strengthen those calf muscles!



7 a.m.: Balance and Blow Dry:

Alternate balancing on one foot and then the other while blow drying or combing your hair. It's harder than you think, so avoid practicing this while shaving - yikes!

8 a.m.: Car Hand Calisthenics:

While stopped at a red light, try opening your fingers wide apart and then closing them into a fist. Then extend your fingers and fold them, at the knuckles, toward your palm. Alternate these two exercises as quickly as possible to help strengthen your hands and forearms.

9 a.m.: Computer Start-Up/Rev-UP:

While waiting for your computer to start up, sit in your chair and alternate walking in place on your toes and heels (toe, toe, heel, heel, etc). The more you speed up this activity, the faster it speeds up the software loading process--really!

10 am, 12 pm and 2 pm: Office walk:

If your job requires you to sit for long periods, get up and take short walks at mid morning, midday and afternoon. A good reason to do this, other than for your health, is because our brain requires oxygen and short breaks from concentration or stress in order to function properly.

1-Minute Workouts Throughout the Day:

- Instead of sitting down while talking on the phone, do lunges or march in place.
- Stand up and do some desk push-ups: stand and place your hands a little more than shoulder-width apart on the edge of your desk. While supporting your weight with your extended arms, walk your feet away from the desk and perform push ups. This works your chest and the back of your arms.
- Do "double stand ups": Every time you sit down in a chair, stand back up and sit down again. Remember that the slower you sit and stand, the harder your muscles work.

5 pm: TAKE A WALK with a friend, family member or pet

7 pm: Housework as a workout!

- Do a few loads of laundry. Carrying the laundry basket up or down stairs is a hard work and folding clothes works the arms muscles.
- When ironing, keep your body as upright as possible and do side leg raises. This is a great way to tone the outer thighs.
- Vacuuming? Put some speed and vigor into pushing that machine. Make sure to switch your pushing arm every so often to balance the workout.

8-10 pm: TV time? Don't Take it Lying Down!

- Walk in place for the length of a 30 minute sitcom.
- Got a treadmill? *Use it!* It's a great way to watch TV without the guilt
- Spend commercial breaks doing stretches and floor exercises. It'll keep you from visiting the refrigerator.

10 pm: Flossing Toe Taps:

The night's still young! How about one last activity before bed to work the oh-so-neglected front side of your shins: while flossing your upper teeth, do toe taps with your right foot. While flossing your lower choppers, tap with your left foot.

And... That's a Wrap!

Sweet dreams.



Source: *The Ultimate Guide of One-Minute Workouts* Nygard & Hopper. Reed Publishing, 2000.



About the Olympics

The '30s—No Dice for Hitler

1932 - Los Angeles/Lake Placid. These games were held in the middle of the Great Depression but still had record crowds in attendance.

The first time the gold medal winner was given a national anthem, a flag raising and a victory platform. The first time the ceremony took place directly after the event.

The first automatic timing and photo finish devices were introduced.

1936 - Berlin/Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

When Berlin was chosen to host the games, no one knew Germany would soon invade all of Europe. The summer games were a bad time for Adolph Hitler. In his grand scheme, these games were to show the unquestioned superiority of his race. Jewish and African-American athletes proved him terribly wrong. Adding insult to injury, he was embarrassingly rebuked by a beautiful American champion with whom he was smitten - read about Helen Stephens in the Medal Ceremonies for this week.

The first games to be broadcast on television, but only to local TVs around the city in public places - thus locals could watch for free.

The first year the Torch Relay was run.

Men's Basketball joined the games but no one taller than 6' 3" was allowed to compete! The U.S. team, sponsored by Universal Studios, won the gold.

The 1940 and 1944 Olympics were canceled due to World War II.

Training Tips

This Week's Stretch & Strengthen Exercise:

Lunges & Warrior

Warrior Instructions:

- You're stretching your hips, inner thigh, and calf while strengthening your thigh.
- Start with legs spread wide, facing forward.
- Turn to your left and step out slightly farther with your left foot; keep your right foot planted.
- Bending at the left knee, dip your hips down toward the floor. Hold for 5 breaths.
- Come back up to standing facing forward.
- Repeat the sequence to the right and continue to alternate legs until you've done 2-5 on each side.



Lunge Instructions:

- Step forward with your left leg.
- Bending at the left knee, dip down to where your right knee almost touches the floor.
- To come up and out of the Lunge press your left heel into the floor, squeeze your left thigh muscles and rear end, and stand up straight over your left foot, dragging your right foot up to (even with) your left foot.
- Repeat the sequence with the right leg and continue to alternate legs until you've done 10 on each side.



Important Cautions for both:

- As you get stronger, hold a weighted object such as a dumbbell or a medicine ball.
- Add more lunges or more sets as you get stronger.
- Don't ever let your bent knee go past (over) your toe. Always strive to keep your knee in line with your ankle.
- Don't step out too far or your hip flexors (muscles that go across the front of the hip joint) will over stretch and begin to ache.



Training Table Recipe

Tabbouleh

- 1½ cup uncooked bulgur
- 1½ cup boiling water
- 1½ cup diced English cucumber
- 1 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 cup diced tomato
- ¼ cup chopped green onions
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 TB extra virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 4 garlic clove, minced

Combine bulgur and boiling water in a large bowl. Cover and let stand for 30 minutes. Drain; place bulgur in large bowl. Add cucumber and remaining ingredients to bulgur. Toss well. Cover and chill at least 1 hour. Serves 8.

Calories 120, Fat 2.2g, Protein 3.9g, Carbohydrate 23.3g, Fiber 5.7g, Sodium 159 mg.

Safety Corner

Backpack Sense

Signs a backpack is too heavy

- Change in posture when wearing the backpack
- Struggling when putting on or taking off the backpack
- Pain when wearing the backpack
- Tingling or numbness
- Red marks

Tips for safe backpack use

- Wear both straps
- Wear the backpack over the strongest mid-back muscles
- Lighten the load
- Use proper lifting techniques: Bend at the knees and use your legs to lift the backpack placing one shoulder strap on at a time.



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