



## FLEX Your Opportunity

### REGISTRATION EXTENSION!

Register now through OCTOBER 29 to be included in your agency's total

Over 29 agencies have signed up for the *Challenge*, and there is still time to register. So get moving, and don't forget to log your activity: at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week.

#### Instant Escape: De-Stress in Minutes

Running away to a remote island may sound appealing, but may not be realistic. However, an instant escape may be just a footstep away. Any type of physical activity can provide a brief respite from stress and lift your spirits.

You may wonder why anyone would want to "exercise." Well, researchers who asked physically active people this question found that most are motivated to be active "to feel better mentally and physically." Researchers also found that people who avoid physical activity are more likely to feel tired and depressed.

#### *Instant Escape . . .*

It takes just one short bout of activity to:

- Improve your mood
- Decrease feelings of worry and uncertainty about the future
- Reduce stress
- Increase self-esteem and your belief in yourself

#### To get started:

- Choose activities you enjoy. Try to make your activity a regular part of your day to get the most mood-enhancing effect.
- Many people find the sunlight and fresh air of outdoor activities enhance their mood. Try a hike through a local park, a bike ride around your neighborhood or a quick walk around your office building.
- Ask someone to join you if it would add value to your escape.

#### Need a push to get moving?

#### Visit CDC's Physical Activity Guide to Getting Started

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/start/index.htm>

#### Top 3 Agencies\*:

Farm Credit Administration- 13.2%  
OPM - 12.5%

National Science Foundation - 12.1%

\*based on percent of total agency employee count

## Take a Minute to Stretch

Don't overlook the importance of stretching when you're active. Just minutes of stretching can help relieve tension, improve your circulation and help prevent injury or soreness from physical activity.



### Neck, Upper Back, and Shoulder Stretch

(Source: CDC)

This easy stretch targets another group of muscles particularly vulnerable to tension and stress—the neck, back, and shoulders. Do it often—after strength training, and during any

activity that makes you feel stiff, such as sitting at a desk or at a computer. You'll find it rejuvenating.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, your knees straight but not locked, and your hands clasped in front of you.
2. Rotate your hands so that your palms are facing the ground; then raise your arms to about chest height.
3. Gently press your palms away from your body. You should feel a stretch in your neck and upper back and along your shoulders.
4. Hold the stretch for a slow count of twenty to thirty, breathing throughout.
5. Release the stretch and repeat.

#### Make sure you:

- Breathe throughout the stretch.
- Don't curve your back or arch it.

#### For more office stretches visit:

[http://www.cdc.gov/nccdpHP/dnpa/physical/growing\\_stronger/exercises/cooldown.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdpHP/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/exercises/cooldown.htm)



## Fueling Your Activity

### CHOPS WITH RICE

1. Cover the bottom of a crockpot with sliced onions.
2. Place trimmed pork chops on onions.
3. Cover with reduced fat cream of chicken soup.
4. Add another layer of pork chops and more soup.
5. Cook on high for 4-5 hours or low for 7-8 hours.
6. Serve chops on brown rice with steamed frozen vegetables.

Access a body-mass index calculator at  
<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmil/bmicalc.htm>



The article "Instant Escape: De-Stress in Minutes" and "Fueling Your Activity" content is the intellectual property of Group Health Plan, Inc., of Minnesota, a subsidiary of HealthPartners, Inc., and, therefore, protected. The dissemination of these materials by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should not be construed as an endorsement of the views expressed herein, or the general policies, activities, or products of HealthPartners and/or Group Health Plan, Inc.