

# Exercising Simplicity

## Use environmentally friendly muscle power instead of fossil fuels

By Robin Burfield

**M**any Americans are feeling overworked and stressed, and are struggling to fit exercise into their busy schedules. What if there were a way to shape up, clear your head, and help the planet at the same time? There is! Many of our time-saving devices burn climate-changing fossil fuels instead of the cleanest energy there is — muscle power! One of the easiest ways to shape up is to cut the electric and gas-powered gadgets and use simpler, human-powered devices.

According to the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines, Americans need to engage in 30 to 90 minutes of daily physical activity, which can be broken up into smaller chunks. Lifestyle activities such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator are the key to burning calories and saving energy throughout the day.

One great way to knock off some of the 90 minutes a day of recommended activity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to park the car at home and walk or bike places instead (you can even record your impact by

saving one car trip a week through our Turn the Tide program at [www.newdream.org/ttoffline](http://www.newdream.org/ttoffline)). Smaller activities add up too. Using a simple clothesline instead of a dryer can save a lot of energy and is a great way to build upper body muscle. It may be quicker to order takeout for dinner, but the rhythmic act of chopping vegetables for a homemade soup once a week can relax your mind while working your arms. Doing yard work is another good way to stay active, save energy, and enjoy the spring weather (read more on page 11).

While some people may not think they have the time to do things the slower, simpler way, consider the time invested in good health. Instead of stressing about getting to the gym for a step class, try these green and easy alternatives. One member, Gina Duffin of Washington, D.C., even made monthly contributions to New American Dream with the money she saved getting free exercise instead of paying to go to the gym!

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### 12 ways to exercise, reduce stress, and save the planet!

	Calories Burned Per Activity*	Pounds Lost/Year*	Other Environmental and Personal Benefits
Walk to work instead of driving (one mile each way, five times a week)	170	13	Save 18 gallons of gas for compact car/35 gallons for SUV**
Bike to work instead of driving (two miles each way, five times a week)	164	12	Save 36 gallons of gas for compact car/70 gallons for SUV**
Use a basket when grocery shopping instead of a cart (once a week, 45 minutes)	128	2	You'll only buy as much as you can carry
Cancel the takeout and prepare a fresh meal from scratch (once a week, 30 minutes)	85	1.2	Fewer pizza boxes and takeout containers in your local landfill
Dry your laundry on a clothesline instead of using an electric dryer (once a week, 20 minutes)	45	.6	Varies by model; the average dryer uses about 5 kilowatt hours and costs about \$85 per year to run***
Take the stairs instead of the elevator (five times a week, two flights, two trips per day)	62	5	Saves a minimal amount of energy depending on a variety of factors like model and capacity. Mostly it's just good exercise.
Walk to your co-worker's office instead of using e-mail (five times a week, 15 minutes)	56	4	Stretch your legs and have a real conversation
Play outside with your kids instead of watching television (Once a week, one hour)	272	4	Saves about 13 kilowatt hours a year; more fun and time with family and/or friends
Walk your children to school (One mile each way, five times a week)	170	13	Save 18 gallons of gas for compact car/35 gallons for SUV
Use manual clippers instead of a gas-powered trimmer (once a month, 30 minutes)	153	.5	Saves as many smog-causing emissions as a car driven more than 175 miles; saves on noise pollution, too****
Use a rake instead of a leaf blower (once a week, 30 minutes)	146	2	Same as above****
Use a push lawn mower instead of a gas model (once a week, 30 minutes)	204	3	Same as above****

\* All calorie and weight loss statistics are calculated based on the energy needs of a 150-pound female using the resources available at [www.caloriesperhour.com](http://www.caloriesperhour.com). Results will vary according to diet, weight, age, sex, and other factors.

\*\* Find fuel savings based on your actual commute and car model at the Environmental Protection Agency's website, [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).

\*\*\* Calculate your actual energy use by multiplying your dryer's wattage (listed on the label) by the time it is in use to get your total energy use.

\*\*\*\* Based on a typical 3.5 horsepower engine. Every gallon of gas saved results in 19 fewer pounds of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere... another great way to lose a few pounds.