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Confessions of an “Active Couch Potato”

Monday, October 12, 2020

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A change of direction thanks to a Spark friend and some neighborhood squirrels.

As my spark page explains, I was always active and fit even as I packed on the pounds. If I had been able to control my eating, I may never have needed Spark in the first place. DH sometimes called me “ravenous woman” or “bottomless pit.” I can even overeat healthy food.

Using the nutrition tracker and my food scale I reached maintenance and stayed there year after year.

I first heard the term “Active Couch Potato” on a Spark Friend’s blog (Watermelon, I think) who referred me to this article.

www.sparkpeople.com/resource/wellness_articles.asp?id=2042

I recognized myself immediately. Run, walk, swim, aerobics, weight training in the morning, then I would sit around the rest of the day – reading, surfing the web, watching TV and eating, of course. Why not? Look at how many calories I must have burned.

I revisited that article upon my recent return to Spark. It’s been easy for me to fall back into old habits.

Enter the squirrel. You’ve seen squirrels running back and forth repeatedly gathering and burying nuts.

What if I broke up my afternoon of couch sitting like the squirrels? Walk a repeated path through my house but NOT using it to gather snacks. DH named it the “route of the confused squirrel!”

As the article indicates, there are health benefits to even short intervals of exercise. So now my afternoon is punctuated with several intervals of continuous walking through the house. 10 minutes qualifies as “exercise” but I walk for 12-13 minutes which equals $\frac{3}{4}$ mile for me. It all adds up and 12 minutes really isn’t that long.

I still do the morning exercise I always like (except swimming, darn COVID!), but no more afternoon couch potato.

A trip back in time for those who didn’t know me way back when.

My aha moment is different than most. In a local 5k I had just won my age group with the slowest time I had ever recorded. AND I won a turkey for being the oldest woman running (there were older women walking the race). Here I am. Smiling? More like a grimace. DD (Hayburner1969) is carrying my turkey.

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What could I do? I couldn't possibly train any harder.

1 Spark year later and 25 pounds lighter I ran 3 ½ minutes faster in the same race and my joints appreciated not dragging the extra weight up that final hill.

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TOMATOCAFEGAL

I am more active than I have been in years. I still need to do more!
231 days ago

[v](#)



ISNESS

You're quite inspirational, active lady. Consequent and exercising, day by day. I admire it. Thank you for the lovely blog. Running outdoors is quite different, more strenuous. Congrats on winning the turkey!
236 days ago

[v](#)



PEGGYO

237 days ago

[v](#)



OVERWORKEDJANET

Nice blog!

I so relate to this as I do the same. I learned to get up every hour and move around to keep my joints limber and circulation going. Now I have more than steps a day even being a (Couch Potato)
238 days ago

[v](#)



SUSANYOUNGER

238 days ago

[v](#)



OSONIYE

That's great. Old article but very relevant information!
238 days ago

[v](#)



CD4114015

I am saving this and starting to do as you do!
238 days ago

[v](#)





AMYG5025

Great blog! I often try to be inefficient to get in more activity. Take one item at a time from one end of the house to the other to get extra steps. Or do things by hand instead of using a kitchen appliance. Or park far away and walk to wherever I'm going. I like the idea of the confused squirrel! :)

238 days ago

V



THINCPL2004

That's fantastic! No more couch potato for you!

239 days ago

V



RACHNACH

**KEEP
SPARK
ING!**

239 days ago

V



HARRIETT14

It seems to me that you and your husband have a great relationship and a sense of humor. When I watch TV I always bring in somethings to work on. So my hands and mind is busy and yet I know what's going on in the program. There are times when I feel down, I eat. We are only human, so we start over again.

239 days ago

V



JPPERSELL

Wow! You ran a 5k that is amazing! I did one too about ten years ago. It was fun but hard because I am not naturally a walker. I have an apple watch and it tells me to stand from time to time when I am sitting for long periods of time. I do it and it actually records my activity. I am going to read the article because I am pretty sure it pertains to me too.

239 days ago

V



SHAKERATTLEROLL

Thank you for your thoughts for today. I try to break my exercise routine to last through out the entire day because I can /have become a couch potato and so breaking up my exercise helps me.

239 days ago

V



YELLOW09RED

Good morning Eileen,
I do my walking in the evenings inside. While watching TV.
Hope your week is great.
Take care and be safe.
Hugs and smiles,
Debbie



239 days ago

V



AGEJEW

Well written and fun to read. Thanks for sharing!

239 days ago

V



GRANDMA524DAR

Good article, I recognize me!

239 days ago

V



WATERMELLEN

My at-home morning exercise routine (no more gym!!) is extended with two Henry walks, one after lunch and one after supper: fighting that "active couch potato" syndrome too!!

239 days ago

V



DARCY-B

:)

239 days ago

V



AZMOMXTWO

I like the honest way you word things

have a fantastic day

239 days ago

V

RHOOK20047

Getting to know our bodies and our shortcomings is an important part of this health journey.

V



Glad you found it out.
239 days ago



PLCHAPPELL
Working on that comfortable weight
239 days ago



MARYJOANNA
WTG!
239 days ago




LIS193
Great blog!



239 days ago



QUARTERMASTER3

239 days ago



MARYJEANSL
Is it too cold there to enjoy walking outside? Here it's still way too hot for me, but in the next few weeks it should start to get pleasant. I always prefer to walk outside when the outside temperature cooperates. Extra walking is always a good thing to do,
239 days ago



SPEDED2
You speak to the truth for many of us. Thanks for sharing.



Stay safe. Be well.
239 days ago




MTN_KITTEN
Active Couch Potatoe ... hahahaha.

I have become one. I went from a total couch potatoe ... to walking 5x a week but sitting most of the day after getting in my walk.




239 days ago




ALEXSGIRL1

love your honesty Hugs
239 days ago




DOVESEYES

it sure is a journey for life :)
239 days ago



KOHINOOR2

239 days ago



RAZZOOZLE

239 days ago



HOLLYM48
I always find running around the living room to be fitting on the days I don't want to go outside or it is too cold. My basement gym awaits me, but for now, I get lots of moving and grooving at work and get a few more steps in the evening so I get my 12 hours of 250 steps! One good step at





a time, we can always do one more step!
239 days ago

v



BJAEGER307

You and your daughter have always been so inspiring even when you were facing your own battles. I love your positive attitude because it comes through your blogs. You find solutions to the little things that keep up moving on this healthy journey.

Thanks for the share today.
239 days ago

v



1CRAZYDOG

Good plan to housewalk! It helps. I never realized how couch sitting impacted me either!

HUGS
239 days ago

v



SUSIEMT

Good for you! I agree adding more movement to my day has helped me immensely!

((HUGS)))

239 days ago



v



LINDA!

It all sounds familiar. I exercise everyday, gym, weights, etc. Many days (nights) I am on the couch. I also would have never needed Spark had I just not sat down so long. The little bursts of exercise really makes sense.

239 days ago

v



PHEBESS

I also walk the route of the confused squirrel - it helps, doesn't it? Sometimes I dance around wherever we are as well, just for variety.

239 days ago

v



NANASUEH

That was a wake up call. I've found likewise it to be more effective if I'm exercising throughout the day in increments. Plus it's easier on my joints.



240 days ago

v



NASFKAB

So true we cant be as active now, But with taking care can manage to be presentable,
240 days ago

v



PAULALALALA

the 12-13 minute walks around the house are a great plan! I'm guilty of thinking my hour of planned fitness buys me a pass for the rest of the day.....so I'm going to implement a "route of the confused squirrel" at my house!

240 days ago

v



2BDYNAMIC

I really like those brief Intervals of exercise and as you say they do add up! ...I consider those bursts of movement a real Bonus! ...Good job! ..We must keep moving! ..Now before a longer walk, I am going to lap the house...lol!

240 days ago



v



WHILLSW

Good message & reminder....easy to become a couch potato & say ok because of morning exercise....



240 days ago

v



NANCY-



240 days ago



MEADSBAY

Seems like there are plenty of of Sparkies living that way!



240 days ago



MORTICIAADDAMS

I have always read that you can't out-exercise a bad diet but I did it for decades until I reached menopause. Now I mostly eat healthy food but too much of it. Not usually meat but fruit and veggies. Like a half of a cantaloupe. I am not as active as I should be either now that I am older.

240 days ago



SUNNYBEACHGIRL

I have the same schedule. Get the exercise out of the way in the morning and sit most of the rest of the day.

240 days ago



SWEETNEEY

kindred spirit here
240 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM



Sometimes it takes personal experience to "wake us up"! (Sign of privilege?)

But I have noticed that with even a minor weight loss, ones pace picks up without any perceived change of effort!

I think the Fitbit folks were peeking at the confused squirrel when they devised the "jiggle on the wrist once an hour to make sure the couch potatoes get up and walk at least a few steps (250) an hour". Only one of my fitbit devices has this feature, but I find it useful to become aware of when I'm sitting too long.

240 days ago



MJREIMERS

I love the honesty in your blog! We may not travel the same path as you, but our journeys are similar. Have a great day!

240 days ago

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Post Comment

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