

Hey, everyone,

In this week's Productivity Tip, we're going to talk about the importance of physical activity.

A couple of years ago I read an interview of Richard Branson that took place on his 90-foot yacht, on the way to his private island for a big party that he was hosting.

The interviewer asked him, "What's your secret? What's your secret to staying so productive?" He seemed to be expecting a much longer answer, but what Richard Branson said was, "Work out." That was his secret.

While this may not really be a secret, if there's one thing that can help people to increase their productivity, especially if they're not physically active right now, it's becoming physically active. There are so many studies that suggest that physical activity improves cognitive performance. It's not really controversial at all.

Of course, a lot of people feel like they just don't have time to exercise because they're too busy being productive! This is a common trap that entrepreneurs fall into. However, as we also discussed with rest and play, the opposite is actually true. If you don't make time for exercise or at least integrate physical activity throughout your day, you simply won't be as productive. That extra hour you spend working instead of exercising will end up lessening the quality of the work hours.

This is why I tend to be ruthless about not letting exercise and physical activity get superseded by anything, really, unless it's just absolutely dire that I finish something. Even then, I will tend to cut something else out of my day and make sure that I get some physical activity because I know it's just that important to my performance.

It's also another reason that I've become a big believer in integrating more physical activity into my daily routine, and I suggest that for others. You can read the chapter on physical activity in my book for all the details, but in short, there are two strategies for how to do this.

The first is to sit less. A good strategy would be to get a standing desk. If you can't get a standing desk, and even if you do have one, take frequent breaks every forty to fifty minutes or so. Studies have shown that even a two-minute break—like getting up and taking a short walk around the room, going to get a glass of water, or doing a bit of light stretching—can have a significant impact, and it can really reduce the harm that sitting causes. It doesn't sound like a lot, but it's enough to reverse a lot of the harmful impacts of sitting.

The second is to increase your "non-exercise physical activity." This is any type of physical activity or movement that doesn't fall into the category of a distinct period of exercise or "working out."

One easy way to do this is just walking more. I suggest aiming for about 10,000 steps a day, and you can use a device, a pedometer like the Fitbit, to track your number of steps. If you work in an office most of the day, that can be a little bit challenging. One thing you can do is walk or bicycle to work. If you live too far to do that, you can drive part of the way and park a ways away from the

office and then walk the rest of the way. You can commute by foot or bicycle to do your grocery shopping. You can get a trailer for your bike that you can carry lots of stuff on. You can do your own gardening. You can do manual labor around the house and in the yard. You can take the stairs instead of the elevator. If you're looking for opportunities to stay active throughout the day, there are a lot of different ways that you can do that.

If you've been predominantly sedentary for a while, getting consistent with physical activity can be challenging. Fortunately, I have two programs that can really help with this. The first is 14Four, which you have access to as part of the course. I've included video demos of simple, but effective bodyweight workouts that you can do at home, in your office, or in your hotel room while traveling that don't require any special equipment. That covers the exercise piece well.

But I also have a new iOS app, called Made to Move, which is designed to help you integrate more physical activity into your day. When you buy the app, you not only get a lot of great content and instruction, but you also get live coaching from one of the Made to Move experts. The feedback on this app has been tremendously positive, so check it out if you haven't already.

Of course 14Four and Made to Move are great tools for you to share with your patients and clients, since it's likely that many of them struggle with this issue as well.

Okay, that's it for now. See you next time.