

Exercise Snacking for Move More Month

It's time for America to get moving. A recent large-scale [study](#) published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) shows inactivity can be worse for you than smoking, diabetes or having heart disease.

Despite that, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says only 23% of Americans get enough exercise. To help reverse that trend, the American Heart Association has named April Move More Month.

Previously known as National Walking Day, the now month-long awareness campaign is designed to encourage people to take part in more physical activity on a regular basis, and to highlight the health benefits of exercise.

For some, starting and maintaining an exercise routine is a tall order. OSF HealthCare interventional cardiologist Dr. Darrel Gumm says time is often a factor.

"We hear this all the time. 10,000 steps, you gotta get to the gym, but you know it's just not possible for everyone to do," said Dr. Gumm.

Dr. Gumm says he has a perfect solution for people looking to start small. Move More Month is a perfect time to start something called *exercise snacking*.

"It's called exercise snacking – little bits of exercise throughout the day," explained Dr. Gumm. "And it's so simple – you're just going to love it. It's three flights of stairs, three times a day, three days a week."

Exercise snacking was introduced in a [study](#) published in the journal *Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism*. The six week study found a test group of sedentary adults who participated in the stair regimen showed definite health improvements, compared to a group who did not climb stairs.

"Now you have to be able to handle stairs, but for everybody who can handle stairs, this is a great way to get a little bit of toning, and at the end of six weeks they showed the exercise group had better cardiovascular toning and strength. All things that really help with our general health," said Dr. Gumm.

Speaking with your primary care physician about starting an exercise program should be your first step. However, Dr. Gumm says his main message is to get up and get active in a smart, safe way, and exercise snacking could be the first step to success.

"It's really, really important to think about, to incorporate exercise into our daily routine. This is a great way to do it," he said.

Although moderate physical activity like climbing stairs is safe for most people, Dr. Gumm recommends to check with your primary care physician before starting any new exercise program, especially for those who have a pre-existing health condition.

For more information about OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute and to take a free Heart Health Risk Test click [here](#).