

Be Active

10 minutes at a time!

Andrea McGowan, 44, doesn't let a little winter weather stop her from getting her daily physical activity.

"One time, I had to pick up a prescription at the drugstore and the snow was really deep so I got my snowshoes out and they worked great. I also own spiked shoes so I don't slip on the ice while I'm walking."

Andrea cycles to work as a time-saving way to fit physical activity into her busy day. "I ride year-round when I can," she said. When snow and ice make that impossible, she takes a walk—"really walking, not just strolling," she said.

"And if I have to run an errand, I'll take my bike or walk with a mini-trailer to carry things like groceries back home."

Andrea is actually a descendant of Canadian athletic royalty—her grandmother was a gold medalist in the 1929 Olympics. Andrea, too, has the physical activity bug and she's made it a part of her daily life. It's just another routine part of the day—like brushing her teeth or having lunch.

"Physical activity is an important part of my life," said Andrea, who lives with her husband and five-year-old son in Kingston. "I suffer from chronic depression and anxiety disorders and being active—especially outside—really helps with that." One of her favourite stress-relieving activities is walking her dog at Kingston's Lemoine Point, as well as her regular yoga sessions.

"Andrea is a great example of how you can make physical activity a natural part of your day," said Debra Vine, a member of Motiv8, a KFL&A Public Health initiative that's about eating well, getting fit, and living life. The Motiv8 vision is that all adults in KFL&A will have the supportive environments they need to increase awareness, promote motivation, and build skills to improve their health by eating well and being active.

Adults need 60 minutes of light effort activity every day of the week. "Some find it easiest to achieve this," said Debra, "by breaking that time up into 10-minute segments. You can fit it in during breaks at work, during your child's activity, as dinner is cooking, or before your child's school bus arrives.

"Another important Motiv8 message is role-modelling—when adults pass these healthy habits on to the children in their lives. Andrea is doing that with her young son, who sees his mother being active throughout her day."



With winter around the corner, it's important to follow Andrea's example—and avoid the temptation to hibernate, says Debra. So try taking a walk with family or friends through local conservation areas or on local trails. Too cold? Dress appropriately with lots of layers.

Beyond walking, says Debra, "there are plenty of activities that you can only do in the winter such as curling, ice skating and skiing and many indoor activities that can keep you going, too, such as swimming, squash, and volleyball."

"Once you start to be physically active on a regular basis, you never want to stop," says Andrea.

For information about free indoor walking programs or for ideas on how to stay active call 613-549-1232, ext. 180.



An initiative by KFL&A Public Health

Check out all eight factors at www.eatwellgetfitlivelife.ca