

Walking in place during commercials offers a good calorie burn

24 January 2012, By Jeannine Stein

Fitness experts are always telling us that incorporating movement into our day is a good way to burn calories. But is it effective? A study finds that walking in place during commercials while watching TV actually provides a pretty good workout.

Researchers from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville studied a group of 23 men and women ages 18 to 65 under a number of conditions to see how many calories they burned. The study participants also represented a wide range of weights, from normal to obese.

Their calorie expenditure was monitored while the participants were both sedentary and active, such as reclining, sitting and [watching television](#) for an hour, standing, stepping in place during commercials while watching television for an hour and walking on a [treadmill](#) at 3 mph. Steps were counted during the walking-in-place scenario.

Stepping in place during commercials burned an average 148 calories and resulted in an average 2,111 steps in about 25 minutes. Walking on a treadmill for an hour burned an average 304 calories. Being sedentary didn't provide much activity at all - sitting and [watching TV](#) for an hour burned a whopping 81 [calories](#), hardly enough to make a dent in that bowl of ice cream.

The study authors said that commercials could serve as a good cue for people, reminding them to get up and be active for a few minutes. Having environmental cues for regular activity is helpful in developing new, healthful habits, a study found, and is part of making small changes for better health.

"Given the large number of hours American adults watch TV," they wrote, "we suggest that TV commercial stepping is one potential approach for reducing [sedentary behavior](#) and increasing [physical activity](#)."

The study appears in the February issue of the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*.

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