

# TIME CRUNCH

How career movers and shakers can work exercise into a packed schedule

STEPHEN WADE | Associated Press

**Y**ou're too busy to exercise, right? Your job consumes all your time. You're strapped by professional and family demands. As you get more and more responsibility, your free time shrinks.

Well, these blockers don't have to be an excuse. Making time simply calls for creativity and a broader understanding of how to get in daily exercise.

"The trap is thinking that exercise must be an hour in the gym," said Charles Scott, who describes himself as an executive mentor or exercise coach.

His message is simple: If you have a very demanding job, you need to find a work-life blend.

"An hour in the gym is exercise," Scott told The Associated Press. "But it's just one form of exercise."

Scott coaches about 70 business executives — online and otherwise — and other busy people to improve their physical and professional well-being. He's based in New York and is relatively hardcore about his own exercise but realizes not everyone can be — or wants to be.

He's planning to run across the Grand Canyon in June — the out-and-back version — that covers about 46 miles. He also has guided his blind friend Dan Berlin on several endurance events including a speed ascent up Mount Kilimanjaro and tandem cycling across the United States with a team of blind cyclists.

## The ambitious person's trap

Rather than terming it exercise, Scott talks about teaching "intentional movement" to his goal-driven clients.

"The ambitious person's trap is when you undermine your physical and emotional health in pursuit of your professional goals," he said. "It's common in this culture among the executives I mentor."

Scott asks busy people to focus on something other than making money or chasing fame inside the profession. He said he tries to emphasize a holistic approach that includes the emotional, the professional and the physical.

"Our bodies must move," he said. "No matter what age you are, our bodies must move to stay healthy. So if you're not exercising, you're out of alignment."



Charles Scott works out with resistance bands and with other people via Zoom at his home.



## Alternative exercise for busy people

Scott has a list of ways to blend movement into your day without needing a gym. Of course, if you can hit the gym, that's great, too.

He suggests doing one-on-one meetings while you're walking instead of sitting behind the office desk or laptop. Or, he suggests standing rather than sitting when you hold meetings.

"If you want a meeting to be short and efficient, choose the standing conference room," he said.

Or do isometric exercises during a meeting to tone, for instance, your stomach muscles.

"Tighten up your stomach muscles. Hold for 20 seconds and don't hold your breath," he said. "Don't make it obvious. Release. Do it again. You'll be sore tomorrow. It burns calories. It tones muscles. And it takes precisely zero seconds out of your I-am-too-busy-to-exercise day."

## Ways to blend work and exercise

Here are a few more ideas about blending exercise into your work schedule.

If your flight is delayed, go for a walk around the airport and add to your daily step count.

Link workouts to daily events. For example, when you wake up, always go for a walk. Or, when you get home from work, do a certain number of pushups after you walk through the door.

Make a workout a social event and do it with a friend or a group.

Give yourself the title "athlete" and build habits around that identity. Scott is an advocate of experiencing "meaningful discomfort," which he calls the "birthplace of resilience."

Pay attention to the food you put in your body. Treat your body with respect.

Take a quick break from answering emails and do 10 squats or pushups or whatever to add movement.

"In business, many people show up to work and they crank it out all day," which he termed a "rookie mistake," like a newcomer going out too fast at the start of a marathon.

"Then they go home exhausted and they are fussy with the people they love."

## The partitioning approach

One of Scott's clients is Harrison (Harry) Kahn, the general manager of the Vermont Creamery, an artisanal dairy.

Rather than blend, Kahn uses the partition method and awakens at 5 a.m. to get in his exercise, typically running, biking, or popping on skis in the winter in largely rural Vermont.

"I kind of get in the me stuff before the rest of the house wakes up," he said.

He said his wife, Elisabeth, teaches French. She sets off early after they work together to get their two children — 11-year-old Iris and 8-year-old Asher — ready for school.

"Charles has reminded me that life isn't a game of comparison with other people," he said. "You have to figure out your own stuff."

Kahn describes himself as a routine-oriented person who is comfortable dividing his day into chapters. Once he's in the office, his attention is the job and 120 employees.

"I'm very focused when I'm at work, so I can get it all in as opposed to going in and out and having the day go on really long."

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