6 Exercise Routines That Won’t Break the Bank

Getting healthy doesn’t have to cost a fortune. If you’re looking to get active on the cheap, check out these ideas for enjoyable, affordable ways to exercise and reap the many benefits of physical fitness. No matter what activity you choose, don’t forget to get in a good warm-up and cool-down. Check out this Veterans Health Library article for more information.

1. **Hiking**
A quick hike allows you to get out into nature and forget the worries of your day. “All you really need is a sturdy pair of shoes with good traction,” says Megan Skidmore, the MOVE!® Physical Activity Program Coordinator at the VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. “Hiking is also a new challenge for your muscles, which have to work in different ways to keep you stable on uneven terrain.”

2. **Jumping rope**
The jump rope gives a great aerobic workout and can improve your coordination. Choose a lightweight rope with foam handles for a good grip. Just put on music and start jumping. Once you feel comfortable, mix up your workout by playing with your foot patterns. Try jumping backward, scissoring your legs, or raising your knees higher.

3. **Using resistance tubes**
Resistance tubes are stretchy bands that sometimes have handles on each end. They are an inexpensive, portable way to fit in strength training. “Stretching and releasing the tube provides resistance for your muscles,” says Skidmore. “You can buy a stronger or easier band depending on your strength level.”
4. Running or jogging
To run safely and pain-free, a pair of running shoes is a good investment. Consider going to a store that specializes in athletic shoes to get fitted. To preserve their support and cushioning, wear them only for running—not while doing errands or playing other sports. Replace them every 300 to 400 miles to avoid injuries.

5. Small-group personal training
If you’ve thought of hiring a personal trainer but are turned off by the high cost, consider small-group personal training. “In this approach, the trainer instructs you and a few other people together,” says Skidmore. This cuts the cost, so you may spend only $20 per session instead of $40 to $100, with an added bonus of spending time with friends.

6. Walking
Brisk walking counts as moderate physical activity. Walking regularly can lower your blood pressure, keep you from gaining weight, and boost your energy. All you need is a pair of supportive shoes, ideally ones that are made for walking or running.

There’s an App for That!
Want to learn how many calories these and other activities burn? Or do you want to find out how many steps you’ll rack up doing these activities? Download the new MOVE! Coach app and start recording your physical activity today! To get the app, you’ll need an iPhone or iPad with iOS version 6.0 or higher. Click here for more information.

Other Ways to Fit In Exercise
To get some extra physical activity into your day, look for more information and tips from the Veterans Health Library in this article.