



## Get Healthy by Taking the Stairs

Gregory Minor, a middle-aged housekeeper at Duke University Medical Center, lost 80 lbs. and 10 inches simply by taking the stairs when he was at work. He's the latest success story in the Duke employee health program known as "Take the Stairs." The self-paced exercise program encourages employees to take the stairs and record how many stairs they climb. After certain milestones - climbing the equivalent of a mile, the equivalent of a 5k, and so forth - the employees get rewarded with small gifts. For Minor, the biggest gift of all was watching his waistline shrink. He reports in a YouTube video promoting the program that he now has more energy and feels better about himself.

### Research Shows Climbing the Stairs Has Multiple Benefits

The Duke wellness program is based upon research that shows using the stairs over a period of months has significant health benefits. A study in *European Heart Journal* followed 69 hospital employees who ditched the elevator for the stairs for roughly 90 days. The employees reaped the following benefits:

- Body fat dropped 1.7%
- Waist circumference dropped 1.8%
- Blood pressure fell 2.3%
- LDL cholesterol fell 3.9%
- Lung capacity went up 8.6%
- 



Given these statistics, it's not surprising that [Gregory Minor lost 80 pounds](#) after 18 months the stairs of Duke University Medical Center.

### Add Years to Your Life and to Your Years

The perks Minor experienced are one small glimpse at the benefits of stair climbing. People who are regular stair climbers generally live longer and have a lower risk of cardiovascular disease than those who take the elevator instead. A Harvard study estimated that 8 flights of stairs per day could reduce your death rate by as much as 32%. Furthermore, as Minor reported when he said he had more energy, stair climbers have better leg strength and aerobic capacity than those who take the elevator, leading to a greater quality of life. Most average, sedentary adults gain an average of two pounds per year. Over ten or fifteen years, this gradual increase in weight leads to an extra twenty or thirty pounds of body weight, resulting in numerous health complications. However, a mere two minutes of stair climbing per day over a one-year period can keep those annual pounds at bay.

### Save Money on Medical Bill Medication

When you start losing weight, lowering your cholesterol level, lowering your blood pressure, and increasing your lung capacity by taking the stairs, you'll also spend less time feeling sick. When you spend less time feeling sick, you spend less time at the doctor. When you spend less time at the doctor, you'll have fewer prescriptions. When you spend less time at the doctor and have fewer medications, you'll save a lot of money on medical expenses. How expensive is it to fight your cholesterol and other conditions with regular medical solutions? Here are a few statistics to encourage you:

- Lipitor, the popular cholesterol drug, can cost as much as \$470.69 when you buy it from an average retail pharmacy
- Even less expensive cholesterol medications still cost hundreds or thousands of dollars per year
- People with chronic conditions, such as heart disease, accrue an average of over \$6,000 in medical expenses each year
- In 2003, a survey found that 63% of families who struggled to pay medical bills also struggled to pay for food, clothing, rent, and other necessities
- Since 1981, bankruptcies resulting from medical expenses has increased 30-fold
- Doctors are prescribing more medications than ever before - approximately 146 drug prescriptions for every 100 doctor visits

Given that the cost of medical care and prescription drugs continues to skyrocket, getting in shape isn't just a quality of life issue anymore. It's also a financial issue. When you keep off the extra pounds and get the other health benefits listed above by taking the stairs, you lower the likelihood of experiencing a number of chronic illnesses. Chronic health conditions related to obesity include:

- [Diabetes](#)
- Hypertension
- Heart disease
- Infertility and erectile dysfunction
- Acid reflux
- Breast cancer

- Osteoarthritis
- Back problems
- [Acne and other skin disorders](#)
- The list goes on...

If you pay for any prescription medications related to these diseases, imagine putting that money back in your pocket! The best part of taking the stairs when you're at work is that it doesn't cost a dime. You don't have to pay for a gym membership, pay for a personal trainer, or go anywhere special to climb the stairs. All you need to do is find the nearest stairwell and climb up and down a few times per day. Good luck with your new stair climbing hobby. Remember Gregory Minor if you need inspiration!