



Tips for Getting Started with an Exercise Routine

1. Choose an activity that:

- 1) is enjoyable
- 2) is convenient
- 3) and doesn't cause pain.

If any of these three variables is not present, we will be hard pressed to incorporate this activity in to our lives, for the rest of our lives.

2. Start with greater frequency and shorter duration (ex. daily for 15 minutes).

Research shows the greater frequency an activity the stronger the habit will be. A shorter duration is easier to mentally prepare for each day. Even if you can physically do longer, tell yourself "just 15 minutes" and if you go longer, then bonus! If you stick with the 15 minutes, you've still accomplished your goal for the day.

3. Plan the activity in your day by writing it on a calendar, in a planner, or on your phone.

Looking at your schedule ahead of time will help you identify any potential challenges and hold you accountable.

4. Set a goal you will need to work toward.

Research also shows that those individuals exercising for another goal(s) beside weight loss will be more likely to stick with it. Give some thought to something that will challenge you but yet is achievable. Perhaps signing up for a community walk, planning a hiking/camping trip, or coaching your kid's soccer team will motivate you to prepare for the activity.

5. Write down your activity.

Just as it's helpful to write down your calorie intake, it's great to keep track of your exercise. It can be very encouraging looking at the number of minutes you've exercised each week. We build from that success and it keeps us moving forward. Set goals for accumulating a certain number of minutes per week. For example, instead of 30 minutes each day, try for 210 minutes per week. This approach will give you accountability but also flexibility for when life's schedule gets a bit hectic.

6. Use heart rate or rate of perceived exertion to monitor your activity and insure efficiency.

Our bodies will improve if we challenge them. As you exercise and become more fit, what used to challenge your body no longer will. Monitoring your heart rate and perceived exertion will help you continue to improve in your health and wellness endeavors.



7. Know the recommendations.

There's a lot of advice and tips out there in the media, know what the recommendations are for your goals. Following are from the American College of Sports Medicine and American Heart Association:

- Do moderately intense cardio 30 minutes a day, five days a week **or** do vigorously intense cardio 20 minutes a day, three days a week and do eight to 10 strength-training exercises, eight to 12 repetitions of each exercise twice a week.
- Moderate-intensity physical activity means working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat, yet still being able to carry on a conversation. It should be noted that to lose weight or maintain weight loss, greater amounts of physical activity may be necessary.
- The 30-minute recommendation is for the average healthy adult to maintain health and reduce the risk for chronic disease.