

## Learn to love exercise

You know exercise is good for you. It can help you lose weight, relieve stress, and boost your mood. You also know it helps prevent heart disease and other health problems. But despite knowing these facts, you may still struggle to get regular exercise.

Improve your perception of exercise. DO NOT see it as just something you *should* do, but as something you *want* to do. Tailor your exercise routine, so it becomes something you actually look forward to doing.

## Do Activities You Enjoy

With so many options for exercise, there is no need to suffer through a workout you do not like.

**Be true to yourself.** Look for activities that suit your personality. If you are a social butterfly, try group activities, such as dance classes, a cycling club, or a walking group. Many groups welcome new members at all levels. If competition is what drives you, take up softball or join a rowing club. If you prefer solo exercise, consider jogging or swimming.

- **Try something new.** There is a whole world of exercise possibilities out there, from salsa classes, to kayaking, to rock climbing. You never know what activities you might enjoy until you try them. So, see what is available in your area and go for it. Whether it is horseback riding, belly dancing, or water polo, find an activity or sport that interests you and sign-up. If you find it hard to go alone, bring a friend or family member.
- **Channel your inner child.** Think about activities you enjoyed as a child and try them again. Was it roller skating, dance, maybe basketball? You may be surprised at how much you still enjoy your childhood pastimes. Many communities have adult leagues and classes you can join.
- **Choose your sweet spot.** Do you love being outdoors? Choose activities that get you outside, such as walking, hiking, or gardening. If you prefer to exercise indoors, think about swimming, active video games, or yoga.
- **Mix it up.** Even the most fun activity can get boring if you do it day after day. Find a few things you like and mix it up. For example, you might play golf on a Saturdays, take tango classes on Mondays, and swim laps on Wednesdays.
- **Add a soundtrack.** Listening to music helps the time pass and keeps your pace up. Or, you might try listening to audio books while you walk or ride a stationary bike. Just be sure the volume is low enough for you to hear what is going on around you.

## Stay Motivated

Getting started with a routine is just the first step. You will also need help staying motivated so that you keep up your new habits.

- **Remind yourself how much you like exercising.** Most people feel really good after exercising. But for some reason, it's hard to remember that feeling before your next workout. As a reminder, make a few notes about how good you feel after a workout. Or, take a photo of yourself after a workout and stick it on the fridge for inspiration.
- **Share your progress online.** Social media offers a number of ways to share your progress and get positive feedback from friends. Look for websites where you can track your daily walk or run. If you like to write, start a blog about your adventures.
- **Sign up for a charity event.** Charity events offer you the chance to walk, ski, run, or bike for a good cause. Not only are these events fun, but training for them can help keep your motivation up. Many charities help participants by arranging training runs or bikes. You'll get fit while meeting new friends. Or, boost your motivation by signing up for the event with family, friends, or coworkers.
- **Reward yourself.** Treat yourself for hitting your goals. Think about rewards that support your efforts, such as new walking shoes, a heart rate monitor, or a GPS watch you can use to track your workouts. Small rewards work as well, such as tickets to a concert or movie.