

Consider Starting an Exercise Routine: 5 Steps to Get Started

Starting a fitness program can be a great idea to improve your health. You can start a fitness program in only five steps!

Assess Your Fitness Level

Assessing and recording your baseline fitness scores can give you benchmarks against which to measure your progress. To assess your aerobic and muscular fitness, flexibility, and body composition, consider recording:

- Your pulse rate before and immediately after walking 1 mile
- How long it takes to walk 1 mile or how long it takes to run 1.5 miles
- How many standard or modified pushups you can do consecutively without rest
- How far you can reach forward while seated on the floor with your legs in front of you
- Your waist circumference, just above your hipbones
- Your body mass index

Design Your Program

It is easy to say you will exercise every day, but a plan is needed to keep you on track. When designing your program keep these things in mind:

- **Determine your fitness goals**
Why are you starting your program? Is it to help lose weight? Having clear goals can help you measure your progress and stay motivated.
- **Design a balanced routine**
Get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. It is suggested that you spread out this exercise during a week. To provide even greater health benefit and to assist with weight loss or maintaining weight loss, at least 300 minutes a week is recommended.



→ Progress slowly

If you are just starting to exercise, start carefully and progress slowly. If you have an injury or a medical condition, consult your primary healthcare provider for help designing a fitness program that progressively improves your range of motion, strength, and endurance.

→ Incorporate activity into your daily routine

Finding time to exercise can be a challenge. Try scheduling time to exercise as you would any other appointment. Plan to watch your favorite show while walking on the treadmill or take a break to go on a walk at work.

→ Allow time for recovery

Some people begin an exercise routine with working out too long or too intensely and give up when their muscles and joints become sore or injured. Start out slowly and progressively increase the intensity. Plan time between sessions for your body to rest and recover.

→ Put it on paper

Being able to see your written plan on paper may encourage you to stay on track.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, June 16). *Benefits of physical activity*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm#:~:text=Being%20physically%20active%20can%20improve,activity%20gain%20some%20health%20benefits.>

This brochure is intended to promote healthy habits. It is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or professional care. Before making changes to your diet or exercise, consult your health care provider.



EXERCISE



➤ Physical activity brings **BENEFITS!**



Physical Activity Brings Benefits

When it comes to benefiting from physical activity it does not matter what your age, abilities, ethnicity, shape, or size is. Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Being physically active can improve your brain health, manage weight, reduce the threat of disease, strengthen bones and muscles, and improve your ability to complete everyday activities.



Better Your Chances of Living Longer

If adults aged 40 and older increased their moderate-to-vigorous physical activity by a minor amount, approximately 110,000 deaths per year could be avoided.

Small things, such as increasing the number of steps taken each day, can make a difference and can lower the risk of premature death from all causes. For adults younger than 60, the risk of premature death levels off at about 8,000 to 10,000 steps per day. For adults 60 and older, the risk of premature death levels off at about 6,000 to 8,000 steps per day.

Bone and Muscle Strengthening

It is important to protect your bones, joints, and muscles as you age. Keeping bones, joints, and muscles healthy can help ensure you are able to do your daily activities and be physically active. Muscle-strengthening activities such as lifting weights can help you increase or maintain your muscle mass and strength. This is essential for older individuals who experience reduced strength and muscle mass with aging. Slowly increasing the amount of weight and number of repetitions you do as part of muscle strengthening activities is beneficial.



Weight Management

Eating properly and being physically active on a regular basis plays a vital role in weight management. You gain weight when you consume more calories through eating and drinking than the number of calories you burn.

To lose weight and keep it off:

If you do not plan to adjust your eating patterns and reduce the number of calories you eat and drink, you will need a high amount of physical activity. Getting to and maintaining a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and healthy eating.

To maintain your weight:

Set a goal to work your way up to 150 minutes a week of moderate physical activity. This type of activity can be anything from line dancing to yard work. This goal of 150 minutes a week can be accomplished by being active for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

How much physical activity is needed varies for each individual when it comes to weight management. You may need to be more active than someone else to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

