



Exercise: Setting Goals to Get Active

Talk to your doctor

Moderate physical activity is safe for most people. But it's always a good idea to talk to your doctor before becoming more active, especially if you haven't been very active or you have health problems.

Why is getting active important?

Being fit helps you look and feel your best. It also reduces your risk for health problems and may even help you live longer. You can make physical activity part of your daily life, just like brushing your teeth or going to work.

Try to focus on three areas of fitness:

- Stretching for flexibility and balance.
- Aerobic activity like walking, biking, or swimming. This helps your heart, lungs, and muscle tone.
- Muscle strength and endurance to help build strong bones and muscles.

What steps can help you get active?

These steps can help you find success when making changes:

1. Have your own reasons. Knowing why you want to get more active can help you make a change.
2. Set goals. Include long-term goals and short-term goals that you can measure easily.
3. Think about what might get in your way, and prepare for those barriers.
4. Get support from others, and support yourself.

How can you set goals?

When you know your reasons for wanting to make a change, it's time to set your goals.

- Short-term goals: Start with small goals that you can reach pretty easily. It's easier to stay with something when you have success early and often.
- Long-term goals: These are large goals that you want to reach in 6 to 12 months.

It will help you stay motivated if you track your progress and update your goals as you move forward.

How do you deal with barriers?

Think about what things could get in the way of your success. By thinking about your barriers now, you can plan ahead for how to deal with them.

Here are tips for dealing with barriers:

- If you feel like giving up, remember your reasons for wanting to change. And think about the progress you've made.
- Try shorter periods of activity spread throughout the day, such as a few 10-minute walks.
- Don't forget little rewards. Something to look forward to can keep you motivated.
- When you hit a barrier, get support from family and friends.

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How can you find support?

Support can make lifestyle changes easier. A workout partner can make exercising more fun, and it's motivating to know that someone is going through the same challenges as you. A partner can help you keep up your routine.

People in fitness groups also can give you support when you don't feel like staying with your plan.

Try these tips to find support:

- Ask family members, friends, and coworkers to join you in getting active. Set goals together.
- Promise to meet a friend or neighbor for a daily walk or other workout.
- Walk a dog every day to help keep your routine.
- Take part in an organized fitness walk or other activity.

Exercise planning form

Bring this sheet with you when you visit your doctor, and use it to plan your exercise program. A personal trainer or fitness expert can help you set your exercise goals.

Physical activities I enjoy:

Physical activities I would like to try:

In the beginning, my exercise program will be:

Aerobic exercises I will do (how often and how long):

Strength and balance exercises I will do (how often and how long):

Flexibility exercises I will do (how often):

Short-term goals. In the next few weeks I will:
As you reach your short-term goals, add new ones:

Long-term goals. In the next 6 months I will:

