



Tips for Exercise Success

Swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing, aerobic dancing, walking or any of dozens of other activities can help your heart. They all cause you to feel warm, perspire and breathe heavily without being out of breath and without feeling any burning sensation in your muscles. Whether it is a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all exercise adds up to a healthier heart.

Here are some tips for exercise success:

- If you've been sedentary for a long time, are overweight, have a high risk of coronary heart disease or some other chronic health problem, see your doctor for a medical evaluation before beginning a physical activity program.
- Choose activities that are fun, not exhausting. Add variety. Develop a repertoire of several activities that you can enjoy. That way, exercise will never seem boring or routine.
- Wear comfortable, properly fitted footwear and comfortable, loose-fitting clothing appropriate for the weather and the activity.
- Find a convenient time and place to do activities. Try to make it a habit, but be flexible. If you miss an exercise opportunity, work activity into your day another way.
- Use music to keep you entertained.
- Surround yourself with supportive people. Decide what kind of support you need. Do you want them to remind you to exercise? Ask about your progress? Participate with you regularly or occasionally? Allow you time to exercise by yourself? Go with you to a special event, such as a 10K walk/run? Be understanding when you get up early to exercise? Spend time with the children while you exercise? Try not to ask you to change your exercise routine? Share your activity time with others. Make a date with a family member, friend or co-worker. Be an active role model for your children.
- Don't overdo it. Do low- to moderate-level activities, especially at first. You can slowly increase the duration and intensity of your activities as you become more fit. Over time, work up to exercising on most days of the week for 30-60 minutes.
- Keep a record of your activities. Reward yourself at special milestones. Nothing motivates like success!

© 2009 American Heart Association, Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized use prohibited.