



Top 10 Tips for Starting a Physical Activity Program

The American Heart Association recommends that all adults get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day, or at least more days than not. If you're trying to lose weight or maintain weight loss, you should get at least 60 minutes each day. If you can't find 30 minutes or an hour in your schedule, break up your activity into 15-minute increments.

1. Wear comfortable clothes and sneakers or flat shoes with laces.
2. Start slowly. Gradually build up to at least 30 minutes of activity on most or all days of the week (or whatever your doctor recommends).
3. Exercise at the same time of day so it becomes a regular part of your lifestyle. For example, you might walk every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from noon to 12:30 p.m.
4. Drink a cup of water before, during and after exercising (but check with your doctor, because some people need to limit their fluid intake).
5. Ask family and friends to join you — you'll be more likely to stick with it if you have company. Or join an exercise group, health club or the YMCA. Many churches and senior centers offer exercise programs too. (Remember to get your doctor's permission first.)
6. Note your activities on a calendar or in a logbook. Write down the distance or length of time of your activity and how you feel after each session. If you miss a day, plan a make-up day or add 10–15 minutes to your next session.
7. Use variety to keep your interest up. Walk one day, swim the next, then go for a bike ride on the weekend.
8. Look for chances to be more active during the day. Walk the mall before shopping, take the stairs instead of the escalator or take 10–15 minute breaks while watching TV or sitting for walking or some other activity.
9. Don't get discouraged if you stop for a while. Get started again gradually and work up to your old pace.
10. Don't exercise right after meals, when it's very hot or humid, or when you just don't feel up to it.

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