



## Adding Exercise to Your Life

You don't have to become an athlete overnight to make exercise a part of your lifestyle. It's actually better if you commit to making small changes in your daily routine. You will be more likely to stick with it. Incorporate exercise into your daily life with these tips.

### **1. Develop a "move more" mindset:** Start each day with the mindset to move more.

- There are numerous ways you can get more movement into your day like:
  - sitting less and standing more
  - taking the stairs instead of the elevator
  - parking in the back of the parking lot instead of by the entrance
  - stretching while you watch TV
- If you begin each day with a "move more" mindset, you will find simple ways to immediately begin adding exercise to your day.

### **2. Commit to regular activity:** You do not have to start training for a triathlon or becoming a fitness buff to benefit from adding exercise to your lifestyle.

- Keep it simple and commit first to getting regular activity – even if it is as simple as a 15 minute walk after dinner 3 days a week.
- Starting small is better than not starting at all.
- Regularly scheduled exercise should be more like an appointment that has to be kept, and less like an activity to squeeze in if there's time.

### **3. Find your favorite exercise:** Find an exercise you like. Forcing yourself to do an activity you don't like will make it difficult to stay committed.

- A good way to identify what type of exercise is right for you is to figure out if you like to exercise alone, with a partner or in a group setting.
- You may have to experiment a little bit before you know. Try different forms of exercise until you find one that energizes you physically and mentally.
- Exercise does not have to be a formal routine at the gym. It can be as simple as going for a bike ride, playing basketball with friends, or taking the dog for a walk. It should just be something you enjoy doing.

### **4. Focus on health and strength and not the numbers on a scale:** Do not be overwhelmed by the numbers on the scale. Treat yourself with compassion and take pride in your body getting stronger or your new ability to exercise longer.

- Focus on the great way your body feels after exercise.

In the long run, exercising to feel a certain way is a more powerful incentive than exercising to look a certain way.

**5. Put yourself first:** Stressful situations can take your focus away from properly caring for yourself. If you neglect yourself for the sake of external problems, you will be creating more problems than you are solving.

- Make sure you do something—however small—for yourself each day.
- Even if you only have 15 minutes, commit to 15 minutes.
- You are not able to effectively take care of anyone else if you do not take care of yourself first.

**6. Exercise with a group:** Exercise doesn't have to be a solo sport. Exercise can help develop a natural sense of camaraderie and community with others.

- Make exercise an outing with friends and family. When you join up with others to exercise, not only do you get the immediate benefits of exercise, you also get to spend time with friends.

**7. Parents, exercise for your children:** Sometimes parents have a hard time finding the time to exercise. By showing your children the importance of exercise, how to exercise and exercising with them, you are helping your children lead healthier and more productive lives. Using your children's health as a goal can often be a helpful motivator.

**8. Look to the future:** Don't get caught up in guilt or regret because you haven't worked out for years. Guilt and regret will likely make you feel worse, and will not help jumpstart a daily exercise routine.

- Make the decision to look forward to the future and what you can become instead of getting stuck staring into the past and wishing what used to be or could have been.
- Start over with a clear plan of what you will commit to doing each day for your health.