

## Getting started with exercise

Exercise, first and foremost, shouldn't be something we dread doing or a means to drop a quick 10 pounds. Did you start a new fitness routine this year? Yes, it can be intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. There are so many benefits to physical activity such as a healthy weight, stronger bones, better sleep, and decreased stress and anxiety, to name a few. You might be looking for tips or motivation to continue your journey. We've got you covered!

Identify your reason for physical activity. Are you trying to lose weight? Manage stress or another medical condition? Or improve your overall wellness?

1. Set a reasonable, attainable goal for the week. For example, if you're new to exercise, running a marathon this year isn't likely to happen. However, walking 30 minutes/per day, two days per week, could be done. Can this goal be a habit you can carry throughout your daily life?
  - We follow a workout program that incorporates five hard workdays, including cardiovascular and strength training, and two rest days, consisting of yoga, stretching, and low-impact activities. This works for us because we enjoy it, make the time, and hold each other accountable. Find what works for you.
  - Try writing out a schedule for the week and make time to complete them just like any other task on your agenda.
  - Make sure what you do choose fits your lifestyle. This might include budget and time.
2. Treat yourself. When you see yourself sticking to the plan, reward yourself. A new shirt, a pedicure, etc. Whatever might motivate you to continue.  
Tip: avoid rewarding yourself with food. We don't want to associate food with behavior change – neither negative nor positive.
3. Start small. You don't need to log tons of minutes at the gym. Even 10 minutes of physical activity can boost your mood and improve your health.
4. Mix it up! Good exercise routines incorporate both cardio and strength training. Both are beneficial to the body in different ways.
5. If what you're doing isn't enjoyable and you're finding it tedious – try something new! If you don't enjoy working out in a gym, do a drop-in class at a local boxing, spin, or yoga class.
6. Figure out a good way to track your progress. For example, this could be the ability to do regular push-ups. This is another way to show you that the work you are putting in is giving results.
7. Most importantly – speak with your physician before starting a new fitness routine, and ALWAYS listen to your body.

If you're interested in reading up on the most current Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, please visit this link: <https://health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/physical-activity-guidelines/current-guidelines/top-10-things-know>.

Remember to fuel your body. Here are some of our favorite post-workout snacks. And don't forget to hydrate!

- Greek yogurt and berries
- Whole wheat toast with peanut butter
- Tuna and whole grain crackers
- Apple slices with cheese cubes
- Whole grain cereal with low-fat milk
- Cottage cheese and fruit