

Overcome Barriers to Physical Activity

Spring is here, summers on its way, and it's time to put your health and well-being into high gear! Try these tips for breaking the common fitness barriers and increasing your physical activity.

Lack of time

- Monitor your daily activities for one week. Identify at least three 30-minute time slots you could use for physical activity.
- As an alternative to scheduling a set time for exercise, add physical activity to your daily routine. Walk or bike to local places, walk the dog, exercise while you watch TV or park farther away from your destination (EVERY step counts!). Try to select activities that can be done anytime during the day, such as walking, jogging or stair climbing.
- Be good to yourself and manage your health even if you are busy. Treating your body well through staying physically active can help prevent major health problems.



Social influence

- Seek out friends and family members who share an interest in increased physical activity. Try to avoid those who will derail your efforts. Lead the cultural change to a fit lifestyle with family, friends and colleagues by inviting them to exercise with you.
- Plan social activities with your kids that involve exercise instead of sitting or eating. Take a walk at lunch with colleagues. Go dancing or bowling with your spouse. Not only will you increase your activity, you'll have fun with your loved ones!

Lack of motivation/energy

- Convince yourself that if you give it a chance, physical activity will increase your energy level; then, TRY IT! Post motivational tips throughout your office or home as daily reminder to achieve your fitness goal.
- Plan ahead. Set time for physical activity as part of your daily or weekly schedule and schedule it on your calendar.
- Make a commitment to a friend to exercise together on a regular basis to hold you accountable to your plan for physical activity.
- Joining an exercise class can inspire you to stay physically fit through making progress with a group of people while developing new friendships.
- Reward yourself to committing to your exercise plan with a soothing massage.

Overcome Barriers to Physical Activity

Fear of injury

- Do warm-up dynamic stretches before exercising and gentle cool-down stretches after your workout.
- Exercise appropriately considering your age, fitness level, and health status. A walk can be as effective as a run; a body sculpting class could be an optimum alternative to a spinning class. Progress physical activity at your own pace.

Lack of resources

- Select activities that require minimal equipment, such as walking, jogging, jumping rope or calisthenics.
- Identify inexpensive, convenient resources that are available in your community, such as community education programs, park and recreation programs, etc.

Traveling for work

- Put a jump rope in your suitcase or try walking the halls and using the stairs in your hotel. When traveling, explore the local area and walk around for 30 minutes or more.
- Stay in places with swimming pools or exercise facilities.

Family obligations

- Trade babysitting or elder-care time with a trusted friend, neighbor or family member who also has small children or elder care responsibilities.
- Exercise with the kids; go for a walk, play tag or other running games, get an aerobic dance or exercise tape for kids and exercise together. Spend time together and still get your exercise!

Senior aging

- Look upon aging as an opportunity to become more active instead of less. Spend more time gardening, walking the dog, and playing with your grandchildren.
- Try to learn a new skill you've always been interested in, such as ballroom dancing, square dancing, or swimming.