

## 25 Tips for Making Exercise Part of Your Routine

If you think you just can't find the time, motivation, or discipline to work out every day, you are not alone. However, it's possible to change this line of thinking and make daily exercise a normal part of your life.

### 1. **Start Slow**

The biggest mistake that people make when starting an exercise plan is starting too fast or too hard. The key in the beginning is to make it enjoyable and fun so you will want to do it every day.

### 2. **Warm Up**

If you are going to do any kind of exercise, don't do it with your muscles cold. Gradually get your heart pumping and blood flowing by stretching and loosening up your joints. You're less likely to injure yourself, and your workout will be more enjoyable.

### 3. **Increase Gradually**

After getting used to a certain level of exercise, you'll want to increase it. Your body will adjust to the stress, so you will eventually need to increase the level of your workout. But do it gradually, intensifying your routine every 2 weeks or so. Consult your doctor or an expert for advice on your next steps.

### 4. **Schedule Workouts**

Make appointments with yourself to work out at specific times and places, just as you do with any other appointment. Make it the most important item on your calendar.

### 5. **Make It a Habit**

If you can exercise at the same time, every single day for a month, you are more likely to make it a habit. Consistency makes habits more ingrained. Once it's a habit, then you can step up the intensity a bit.

### 6. **Forget About Weight Loss**

If you're motivated solely by weight loss, exercise will be a tough proposition. You may not lose weight right away, and this could feel disappointing. Put weight loss aside, and focus on establishing your new lifestyle, one step at a time.



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### 7. **Forget the Gym**

The gym can be convenient, but it can also be intimidating for beginners and confusing if you don't know how to use the machines. Skip the gym and exercise somewhere with less pressure, like at home or the park. You can easily do pushups and crunches and dumb bell exercises at home, work out to a DVD, or go walking or jogging in your neighborhood.

### 8. **Reward Yourself**

Rewards are great motivation, especially if they are frequent in the beginning. Be self-indulgent, but *don't use food as a reward*. Find out what else makes you happy, and celebrate every time you reach a new achievement.

### 9. **Participate in a 30-Day Challenge**

Challenge yourself, and see if you can rise to the occasion. Do it with a group or your significant other and include rewards to motivate yourself and everyone else.

### 10. **Record Your Progress Publicly**

On your Facebook page, in your blog, on Twitter, in emails, or in your own journal—there is nothing more motivating than positive public pressure. Your social networks can keep you accountable. Step it up by making a promise that you will commit to this goal for a month, and post your results every day.

### 11. **Set Goals**

What are you trying to get out of your exercise? Figure out if you're trying to build muscle or burn fat—these are two competing goals. Try to set goals for each week. What do you want to accomplish this week? Write it down, post it online, and make it your mission.

### 12. **Make It Fun**

Exercise doesn't—and shouldn't—have to be a chore. Enjoy yourself, and you will actually look forward to your workouts.

### 13. **Fuel Up**

You should never exercise on an empty stomach, especially if your workout is more than 30 minutes. Eat something small and protein-rich an hour or two before you start, such as a banana, peanut butter toast, or an energy bar.

*Adapted from content provided by J. Michael Gonzalez-Campoy, MD, PhD, FACE*



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### 14. Hydrate

Make sure that you hydrate an hour or 2 before you work out; water is best. Hydration is important whether or not you exercise, so remember to drink water throughout the day.

### 15. Exercise Early

Most people like to work out early in the day so it doesn't interfere with any other plans. Nevertheless, you can work out any time of the day, whatever works the best for you, as long as you exercise at some point.

### 16. Get a Workout Buddy

Find someone at your fitness level, and commit to working out a certain number of times a week together at certain times. This will make you more likely to keep your workout appointments, and workouts can be more enjoyable if you spend them chatting with your buddy.

### 17. Change It Up

Walking or running every day is excellent exercise, but make sure to include other activities such as swimming, biking, strength training, aerobics, or pilates. They all work out different muscles and step up your metabolism. Variety will make your workout routine more fun while getting you in better shape.

### 18. Do a Little Bit More Often

You don't need to work out for a long time, and you certainly don't need to be a weekend warrior. Remember that you can spread your workouts throughout the day, like several 2-minute walks, until they add up to 30-60 minutes.

### 19. Just Do It

If you dread an upcoming workout, don't even think about it—just lace up, head out the door, and do what comes naturally. It will be over before you know it.

### 20. Follow the 10% Rule

Don't increase your workout time or distance by more than 10% per week. This is a very conservative rule, but sticking to this will prevent burnout or injury.



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### 21. **Go Hard, Then Easy**

If you do a hard work out today, rest or go easy tomorrow. Don't do 2 hard workouts in a row. This approach can be incorporated within 1 workout; for example, walk fast, then walk slower. This allows you to burn more fat than staying at a medium pace the whole time.

### 22. **Strength Is Good**

If you're a walker, runner, cyclist or swimmer, strength training would be a good addition to your exercise routine. Nothing too intense, but core-strengthening exercises will help improve your main sport as well as make you healthier.

### 23. **Rest Is Important**

If you don't give your body some rest, you will burn out and get injured. Allowing your body to heal is just as important as the workout in improving performance and fitness.

### 24. **Listen to Your Body**

If you feel like you're overdoing it, you probably are. Rest and allow your body to recover. While some slight soreness or achiness is normal, you should stop as soon as you feel sharp pain or pain in your joints. You may make a potential injury worse.

### 25. **Forget “No Pain, No Gain”**

You do **not** need pain to get in shape. Take it easy, progress gradually, and enjoy yourself!

