

## **How to Start Exercising: A Beginner's Guide to Working Out**

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Exercising regularly is one of the best things you can do for your health.

Soon after you start exercising, you'll begin to see and feel the benefits that physical activity can have on your body and well-being.

However, working exercise into your routine takes a lot of determination, and sticking to it in the long term requires discipline.

If you're considering starting to exercise but don't know where to begin, this article is for you. Here's all you need to know about starting a routine and sticking to it.

### **Why Exercise?**

Regular exercise has been shown to significantly improve your health.

Its greatest benefits include helping you achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, maintain muscle mass and reduce your risk of chronic disease.

Additionally, research has shown that exercise can lift your mood, boost your mental health, help you sleep better and even enhance your sex life.

And that's not all — it can also help you maintain good energy levels.

In short, exercise is powerful and can change your life.

Summary: Exercise can improve mental function, reduce your risk of chronic disease and help you lose weight.

### **Common Types of Exercise**

There are various types of exercise, including:

**Aerobic:** Usually the core of any fitness program, it includes periods of continuous movement. Examples include swimming, running and dancing.

**Strength:** Helps increase muscle power and strength. Examples include resistance training, plyometrics, weight lifting and sprinting.

**Calisthenics:** Basic body movements done without gym equipment and at a medium aerobic pace. Examples include lunges, sit-ups, push-ups and pull-ups.

**High-intensity interval training (HIIT):** Includes repetitions of short bursts of high-intensity exercise followed by low-intensity exercises or rest periods.

**Boot camps:** Timed-based, high-intensity circuits that combine aerobic and resistance exercises.

**Balance or stability:** Strengthens muscles and improves body coordination. Examples include Pilates, tai chi poses and core-strengthening exercises.

**Flexibility:** Aides muscle recovery, maintains range of motion and prevents injuries. Examples include yoga or individual muscle-stretch movements.

The activities above can be done individually or combined. The important thing is to do what suits you best and to have fun with it.

Summary: Common types of exercise include aerobic, strength, calisthenics, HIIT, boot camps,

flexibility and stability. You can do them individually or combined.

## **How to Get Started**

It's important to consider a few things before you start an exercise routine.

### **1. Check Your Health**

It's important to consult your doctor and get a physical medical examination before starting an exercise routine.

This is particularly important for those who are not used to strenuous physical activities, as well as individuals aged 45 and over.

An early checkup can detect any health problems or conditions that could put you at risk of an injury during exercise.

It can also help you optimize your workout, making it easier for you and your personal trainer to understand your limitations and create an exercise plan tailored to your particular needs.

### **2. Make a Plan and Set Realistic Goals**

Once you decide to start exercising regularly, try to create a plan that includes attainable steps and goals.

One way to do this is to start with a plan of easy steps to follow. Then you can continue building on it as your fitness level improves.

For example, if your goal is to finish a five-kilometer run, you can start by building a plan that includes shorter runs.

Once you are able to finish those short runs, increase the distance until you can run the whole five kilometers continuously.

Starting with small goals will not only increase your chances of success, it will also keep you motivated every step of the way.

### **3. Make It a Habit**

Another key component of exercise success is to stick to your routine.

It seems to be easier for people to maintain an exercise routine in the long term if they make it a habit and do it regularly.

A review of studies concluded that replacing an unhealthy behavior with a new healthy habit is a great approach to maintaining it in the long term.

Furthermore, making a schedule or exercising at the same time every day are good ways to sustain your routine and make it last.

For example, you can make exercise a habit by planning to work out right after work every day.

**Summary:** Before you start working out, get a health check-up and make a plan with realistic goals. Then, make exercise a habit by incorporating it into your daily routine.

## **How Much Exercise Should You Do?**

You don't need to be a high performance athlete or used to working out for hours to start exercising today.

The American College of Sports Medicine's current recommendations for physical activity include at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise per week.

These 150 minutes can be configured any way you want. For example, you can do a 30-minute workout five times a week or a 35 to 40-minute workout every other day.

However, recent studies have shown that packing this minimum requirement into one or two training sessions per week can be as beneficial as spreading the sessions throughout the week.

Overall, it's important to start slowly and increase the intensity as you build your fitness level up.

Lastly, even though a daily amount of physical activity is needed for good health, allowing your body to rest is important too.

Not letting your body recover from the stress of exercise increases the risk of injuries, such as muscle strains and stress fractures, and can result in overtraining syndrome (OTS).

Exercising too much can also weaken your immune system and increase your risk of infection, hormonal imbalances, depressed mood and chronic fatigue.

Summary: The minimum recommendation for exercise is at least 150 minutes per week. However, it is important to start slowly and let your body rest from time to time.

### **One-Week Sample Exercise Program**

Below is an easy-to-follow, one-week exercise program that does not require equipment and will only take you 30–45 minutes a day to complete.

This program can be adjusted to your fitness level and made as challenging as you want.

Monday: 40-minute moderate-pace jog or brisk walk.

Tuesday: Rest day.

Wednesday: Walk briskly for 10 minutes. Then, complete the following circuits, resting 1 min. after each set but not between exercises. Stretch afterward.

Circuit #1: 3 sets alternating 10 lunges for each leg, 10 push-ups, 10 sit-ups

Circuit #2: 3 sets alternating 10 chair-dips, 10 jumping jacks, 10 air-squats

Thursday: Rest day.

Friday: 30-minute bike ride or moderate-pace jog.

Saturday: Rest day.

Sunday: Run, jog or take a long walk for 40 minutes.

The one-week program above is just a simple sample to get you started. For more workout ideas and plans, check out the following links:

- [9 quick total body workouts](#) that you can do anywhere (no equipment necessary).
- [Workout plans](#) targeting specific body parts and for various skill levels
- [7 beginner workouts](#) for various goals and body parts  
Workouts for your specific body type

Summary: There are a variety of exercises you can do, and the plan above is just one example to help get you started working out.

## A Few Tips for Beginners

### 1. Stay Hydrated

Drinking fluids throughout the day is essential for maintaining [healthy hydration](#) levels.

Replenishing fluids during exercise is important for maintaining optimal performance, especially when exercising in hot temperatures.

Moreover, hydrating after your workout can help you recover and get you ready for your next training session.

### 2. Optimize Your Nutrition

Be sure to consume a balanced diet to support your fitness program.

All food groups are necessary to sustain healthy energy levels and get the most out of your workout. Carbs are particularly important, as they can fuel your muscles before exercise.

Carbs are also important after exercise to replenish glycogen stores and assist the absorption of amino acids into your muscles during recovery.

Additionally, protein protects your muscles from breaking down during exercise, repairs tissue damage and builds muscle mass. Consuming some protein after your workout also promotes fast muscle recovery.

Lastly, regularly consuming healthy fats has been shown to help burn body fat and preserve muscle fuel during workouts, making your energy last longer.

Click these links for more info about [pre-workout](#) and [post-workout](#) nutrition.

### 3. Warm Up

It's important to warm up before your workout. Doing so can help prevent injuries and improve your athletic performance.

It can also improve your flexibility and help reduce soreness after your workout.

Simply start your workout with some aerobic exercises like arm swings, leg kicks and walking lunges.

Alternatively, you can warm up by doing easy movements of the exercise you are planning to do. For example, walk before you run.

### 4. Cool Down

Cooling down is also important because it helps your body return to its normal state.

Taking a couple of minutes to cool down can help restore normal blood circulation and breathing patterns and even reduce the chance of muscle soreness.

Some cool-down ideas include light walking after aerobic exercise or stretching after resistance training.

## 5. Listen to Your Body

If you're not used to working out every day, be mindful of your limits.

If you feel pain or discomfort while exercising, stop and rest before continuing. Pushing through the pain is not a good idea, as it can cause injuries.

Also, remember that working out harder and faster is not necessarily better.

Taking your time to progress through your fitness program can help you maintain your routine in the long term and make the most of it.

Summary: Be sure to stay hydrated, eat a balanced diet, warm up before exercising, cool down afterward and listen to your body.

## How to Stay Motivated

The key to staying motivated and making exercise a habit is to have fun while doing it. This allows you to not dread having to exercise.

Like the sample exercise program shown above, you can mix up activities while keeping it fun for you.

Joining a gym or group fitness class like yoga or Pilates, hiring a personal trainer or doing team sports are also good ideas to increase motivation and enjoyment.

Working out as a group or with a friend can also assist in maintaining accountability and motivate you to keep up your good work.

Furthermore, tracking your progress, such as logging your weight lifting or noting your running times, can help keep you motivated to improve your personal records.

Summary: To maintain your motivation, mix up your workouts, join a gym or team sport and track your progress.

## The Bottom Line

Starting a new exercise routine can be challenging. However, having real objectives can help you maintain a fitness program in the long term.

There are many different types of physical activity to choose from. Find a few that work for you and be sure to vary them occasionally.

The goal is to start slowly, build up your fitness level and let your body rest from time to time to prevent injuries.

Keeping track of your progress or joining a fitness group can help you stay motivated and achieve your goals. It's also important to eat a healthy diet and hydrate regularly.

So, what are you waiting for? Start exercising today!