



College of Agriculture,
Biotechnology & Natural Resources

ACADEMICS | EXPERIMENT STATION | EXTENSION

GET ACTIVE!



This step is the beginning of a healthy, active lifestyle. The practice of “exercise” can be very intimidating if you are not prepared for the commitment that comes with it. This explains why so many people drop out of their programs. So, instead of committing to a full blown exercise routine, why not just find a fun, new activity to adopt.

How about walking or trail hiking? You could try mall walking if you prefer the indoors. Walk briskly and don't stop to shop for at least 15 minutes. Remember in the last step “Get Moving!”, if you find yourself doing some brisk walking in your day (such as to work or during lunch) for at least 10 minutes, you're practically there. Just add five more minutes.

Adopting an activity doesn't have to be a huge time commitment either. Try it twice a week. Pick one weekday and one day on the weekend and invite your friends or family members. Take some of your favorite music along. It makes for a more upbeat experience.

Find some ice skates or rollerblades and go for a skate. If you live near a lake, try rowing in a canoe, kayak or raft. If you have a pool at your house, living complex or neighborhood, go swimming or try walking back and forth in the shallow end. Maybe you could put on your favorite song and dance. It doesn't have to be strenuous, only fun!

You may want to try lots of new things and vary them. Whatever you choose, just make sure it's something you enjoy and do it for at least 15 minutes. Who knows? You may have so much fun you won't want to stop after 15 minutes!



GET FIT!



This step is the “real deal”! This step will make your body fit, make you more healthy, make your heart stronger and lower your risk for disease. All you have to do is boost up your favorite activity from the previous step and make it a cardio program for your heart. This can be done by doing it just a little longer, a little more often and with a little more gusto.

To achieve the best results, warm up before you start your activity and cool down when you are done. A warm up simply means to start the movements slowly and loosen up your joints and muscles.

*Next, progress into a **moderate** activity level for 30 minutes (five times a week). Although taking your heart rate is a great way to measure how hard you are working, you can also use the “talk test”. This means, for moderate activity, you should be able to carry on a conversation comfortably while doing the activity.*

*If you have rapid breathing or become too out of breath to carry on that conversation, the activity is now considered **vigorous** and may be reduced to 20 minutes if desired (three times a week).*

When you are finished, cool down slowly while your heart returns to its normal resting rate.

Move towards a complete program by adding a few muscle strengthening activities. Lift some weights (if you don't have dumbbells, use a quart-size bottle of water or a heavy book) or use resistance bands. Lift 8-12 times (reps) until you can't do one more. Make sure your exercises hit all the major muscle groups (approximately 8-10 exercises) and remember to alternate days for lifting sessions. Push-ups, sit-ups and wall sits are another great way to achieve strength using your own body weight. Doing these activities will help make your muscles, bones and joints stronger.

Finally, add some flexibility activities to your program. A great way to stretch your muscles is to lie down with some pleasant music after completing your entire workout. You will feel terrific and recover faster!

Remember to set short-term, achievable goals (days and minutes you know you can do), then gradually add to your routine until you are able to do this program for three days a week. Sometimes you may want to add an extra day or even two. You'll love the difference it makes!

Record your progress and see how you are improving. Monitoring your heart rate is also a good way to measure your fitness changes.

GET REGULAR!

This step is the ultimate in lifetime achievement. You don't have to be an athlete or competitor. You don't have to abandon the rest of your life's activities. It simply means that you are making a lifetime commitment to a healthy, active lifestyle.

You know what your routine looks like, now just keep doing it. But also try some new things to keep you motivated.

First of all, fit your new plan into a schedule. If you are a routine-driven person, pick out some times to exercise and put it on the calendar. Treat it as important as eating, brushing your teeth or going to work. If you don't like routine, wake up each day and ask yourself, where you might fit it in today? Take along some clothes and be ready!

Set long-term, achievable goals you know you can accomplish. For example, whatever routine you are doing, decide to do it for three months and then re-evaluate it. Maybe you will want to change some things, but first commit to a period of time and then see how it is working.

Take a fitness test at the beginning of your 3-month program (pre-test) and again at the end (post-test). Ask an expert, certified trainer or go online where you will find lots of simple fitness tests to do. You will be amazed at how much stronger your heart and other muscles have become.

After that, take periodic tests and revise your plan as needed. Maybe your routine is becoming too easy or even feels too hard. Adjust your plan to prevent failure. And remember, it's *plans* that fail, not *people*. So make sure you have a plan that is right for you.

Invite a friend to exercise with you. Set up an appointment ahead of time so that you will be less likely to cancel. Ask more than one friend or family member. Involving others will help you stay committed. Every time you encourage new people to join you in your activity, the fun will start all over again!

If you love routine, make it a habit. But, also try new things with different people. There are lots of fun things you can do so you never tire of the same routine. Get trained to teach others—become a certified leader or exercise instructor. Volunteer at a local health facility.

Most importantly, don't quit! If you miss a few days, weeks, months or even longer, don't beat yourself up. Think of it as the break you needed to remind yourself how much you love to move.

Don't compare yourself to others. It's your life, your health and your personal active lifestyle and each one looks different. Create your own experience.

Getting into Physical Activity

doesn't need to be overwhelming or burdensome. Putting physical activity into your life at anytime or any place can make a difference. We often set goals for physical activity that we can't achieve and then wonder why we give up so readily.

Setting Goals

too high can easily lead to failure. It is important to only set goals that you know you can achieve, even if you don't think it is enough or as much as you would like to do. Remember, you can always add more as time and scheduling permits. Know your limitations when setting goals and be sure to consult with your health care provider when starting or increasing your physical activity program.

Stopping your Program

for any length of time is often the greatest hindrance to success. When this happens you might feel as if you have failed. Remember, this is very common. You are not alone and you are not a failure. Think of it as a lapse, not a collapse. Maybe your life took some turns that caused conflict with your plan. Or maybe the plan itself wasn't right for you from the start. Either way, it's the PLAN that failed to work for you. So start simple again. It's never too late and there is no limit on how many times you can restart. Your body is always ready to move again!

	Get Up! (Get Out!)	Get Moving!	Get Active!	Get Fit!	Get Regular!
What is my goal?				“Turn Your Activity Into Fitness!” (ACSM* Guidelines)	“Enjoy Lifelong Activity!”
How do I get there?	“Treat Yourself to Your Favorite Activity... You Deserve it!”	“Step Up Your Daily Activity!”	“Adopt a Fun, New Activity!”	Make Your activity Cardio-Friendly! Do Your Fun Activity More Often & Longer Add a Warm Up & Cool Down	Make a Lifetime Commitment
What do I do?	Bowling Go to the Mountains Lake or Beach Club Dancing Miniature Golf Baseball Game Window Shop Arcade Video Dancing (DDR®) Camping Hit Golf Balls Fishing Play Games	Take a Lunch Stroll Park Further Away Bike to Work Use a Stability Ball Wash the Car Mow the Yard Scrub the Floors Rake Leaves Wash Windows Shovel Snow Walk to the Store Wear a Pedometer Use the Stairs Garden and Pull Weeds Walk the Dog	Rollerblading Bicycling Pool Walking Dancing Mall Walking Trail Hiking Kickboxing Brisk Walking Swimming Jogging Running Rowing Ice Skating Mountain Biking Stepping Up & Down	Add Muscle Strength/Endurance Use resistance bands, weights or perform body weight exercises <i>(alternate days 1 set, 8 - 12 reps)</i> Add Flexibility Stretch regularly <i>15 - 30 sec per stretch</i> .Progress Slowly Invite a Friend Record Progress Set Realistic, Short Term Goals	Increase Workload as Needed <i>(longer time, faster pace, sets)</i> <i>more weights, more reps or multiple</i>
How do I make it work?	Be Creative Involve Family Invite Friends	Get a Dog! Reward Yourself Save Money, Do-It-Yourself	Listen to Music Involve the Family Find Something You Like To Do	Take a Fitness Test (Pre/Post/ Periodic) Re-Evaluate and Modify Goals If You Drop Out, Jump Back In Monitor Progress Try New Things Encourage Others to Join In Become a Leader Set Realistic, Long Term Goals	
How often?	Make the Time!	Anytime!	2 Days a Week	Minimum 3 Days a Week [†]	⇒ Continue
How hard?	Make it Fun!	However You Feel!	Light or Moderate	Moderate or Vigorous [†]	⇒ Continue
How long?	Until the Fun Stops!	Until You Stop!	15 Minutes	20 - 30 Minutes [†]	⇒ Continue

**GET UP!
(GET OUT!)**

Give yourself permission to go out and do something fun because you deserve it! You work hard all week. You do chores, you run errands, you care for family and friends. You have earned the right to do something fun and enjoyable.

Go shopping, dancing or bowling! Take the kids camping, to a neighborhood park, a baseball game or an arcade! Play indoor or outdoor family games. Enjoy the open air at a nearby lake, mountain or beach. Visit a national or state park.

Whatever you do, make sure it's fun and take along some company, such as a good friend or family member. When you're done having fun, relax and refresh! But be sure to *schedule* in these fun, recreational activities. Work and other commitments are already on the calendar...so put some fun and relaxation there too...you deserve it!

GET MOVING!

Step up your daily routine to a more active one without adding more commitments to your already busy schedule. Finding free time in your busy life to schedule in exercise can be a challenge. So why not just add some fun and activity to your current lifestyle?

Try parking a little further away where you don't have to fight the crowds. For quick trips to the store to buy just a few things, walk instead of drive. Use the stairs in public places. For tall buildings, get off the elevator a few floors early and take the stairs the rest of the way. Try wearing a pedometer and track how many steps you walk each day. See if you can add more just by being creative.

Pick one day a week and ride your bike to work. Eat your lunch, then take a stroll with a co-worker or go by yourself and listen to some music. Replace your office chair with a stability ball. It's fun, inexpensive and it strengthens your muscles!

How about those chores that need to be done like washing the car, mowing the yard or washing the windows? Sure, it's easier to delegate the job to someone else or pay for a service. But, why not do it yourself, save some money and burn some extra calories while you're at it? Think of it as scheduling some activity time that is also productive!

Get yourself a dog. There's an activity commitment waiting to happen every morning and every night! Even if you don't have a dog, take a walk and enjoy the sunrise, sunset or moonlight and reflect a little on the day's activities. Invite your child, spouse or a good friend instead.

There's no keeping score, track or time. Do it any time the thought comes to mind, without obligation!

*ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 7th Edition, 2006

[†]**Moderate-** 30 minutes, 5 times a week; **Vigorous-** 20 minutes, 3 times a week
Can be accumulated in 2 or 3 ten-minute bouts