

Tips for Sticking With It!

Start slow and gradually increase	A little exercise is better than none, so start slowly. Don't expect results overnight, but do take small steps each day. It can take weeks or months to see benefits such as weight loss.
Get a partner or join a class	Exercise with a friend or a group to make it more fun! You are less likely to cancel an exercise date with a friend than one with yourself!
Vary your routine	To prevent boredom or if you are injured change your exercise routine. Walk one day; bicycle the next. Mix in recreational sports like golf or tennis to stay active and keep exercise fun. Learn to dance or garden; even chores like mowing the lawn and cleaning your house can keep you moving.
Make exercise fun	Plan your walking route to take in new sights—vary the neighborhoods you walk through and notice the architecture, landscapes and gardens. Take a walk through the zoo or arboretum. Listen to music or a recorded book to help pass the time. Exercise on a treadmill or stationary bike while reading or watching TV.
Write it down	Keep an exercise journal. Write down what you did, how long you did it, and how you felt. This helps to track your progress. Keeping a journal can also be a good way to set future goals. Write down where you want to be next week, month or year.
Try something new	Try something new. It may be that jogging is not for you. Try a swimming program instead or sign up for a yoga class or tennis lesson. Find exercise you enjoy.
Make exercise a habit	Choose a regular time for exercise each day. Sign a contract with yourself to exercise. Put exercise “appointments” on your calendar and keep them!
Make exercise a priority	Make exercise one of your first priorities. You have to believe that exercise is important enough to make it happen. Evaluate the benefits of exercise and your reasons for becoming active.

Adapted from: Methods for changing exercising behaviors. In: American College of Sports Medicine's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 6th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins; 2000.