

GET ACTIVE. STAY ACTIVE

Every year I set fitness goals for myself, what can I do to make sure I stay on track?

- Kent
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Getting in shape or exercising more usually tops everyone's New Year's Resolution list. Exercising on a regular basis has countless benefits: 1.) Reducing stress 2.) Losing weight 3.) Lowering Cholesterol 4.) Lowering your blood pressure 5.) Giving yourself a sense of well-being and countless other positive effects. Hopefully, the following tips will help you get back on track and stay fit year-round.

The first few weeks will be the most important part of your exercise routine. You need to establish habits in your daily life. Don't worry about how much weight you're lifting or how fast you're running on the treadmill. In the beginning go for time. You may start off fatiguing yourself after 20 minutes and that's OK. The idea is for you to get stronger. Remember, "Rome was not built in a day." Building a healthy body won't happen overnight.

One of the most important things that you need to avoid is making excuses to skip a scheduled day or time for exercise. Don't let yourself think "I'll just make up that work out next week." We all know too well how this just snow-balls, and over time your workout routine doesn't even exist. Having a support system in place is always beneficial. Get your spouse involved or get a work out buddy. Positive reinforcement can go a long way in you routine.

Exercise dose not always have to be in a gym. Going for a walk or jog is great for you. Too cold to walk outside? Go to the local mall and do a couple of laps. Taking care of yard work or cleaning around the house can be a workout in itself. Just get your body moving.

Don't be frustrated if you don't see results right away. I hear people say "I've been working out for 3 weeks and haven't lost a pound." What these individuals don't see are that they may be more flexible in their joints (reducing the risk of injury), and daily routines like going up the stairs become easier (the muscles are getting stronger). You may feel the physical and mental results of your exercise program long before you shed those unwanted pounds.

So, this year, try not to think of exercise as a solution to a problem. Set goals reach for them, and plan on making fitness part of your long-term agenda.

Please submit any questions you may have for our sports medicine experts by e-mailing cangelel@dmc.org. In the subject line, please write, "Get Active, Stay Active." We will respond to all the questions we receive and select one each month to feature in our column.

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