



## Why Is It So Hard to Exercise?

*Get fit! Here are 5 steps to get you motivated to move.*

You know you should do it. And you know why: Exercising is critical for safeguarding your health and setting a good example for your kids. So why does it seem so hard to get yourself moving? The truth is: You can. But knowing how and why to exercise isn't enough. You need to develop the right mind-set to get and stay motivated. Here are five steps to get you moving in the right direction -- and keep you going.

### 1. Find Personal Motivation to Exercise

What you need to get you up off the couch is a reason that's important to you. There are all kinds of benefits to getting fit. Which matters most to you? Something as simple as taking a walk after dinner every night helps to control your weight, strengthen your bones, enhance your muscles, reduce your risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer.

### 2. Set Realistic Goals to Get Fit

CDC guidelines call for adults to do 2 1/2 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week. That's a 30-minute walk five days a week. If you kick it up a notch -- jogging or running, for example -- it can be 15 minutes a day, five days a week. Set weekly goals, gradually adding more time and intensity.

### 3. Stop Thinking of It as Exercise -- Do Something You Enjoy

You don't have to go to the gym to get a good workout. It's all about moving more -- however you do it. For some people, going to the gym provides structure that helps them focus and a sense of accomplishment when they're done. What else can you do? Almost anything that gets you and your family moving:

- Walk the dog, or walk a neighbor's dog.
- Have dance contests with the kids instead of watching TV.
- Shoot hoops with the kids or join a league.
- Walk or bike to the store instead of driving, or park far away from the entrance.

### 4. Plan How to Fit Exercise Into a Hectic Schedule

For busy parents, a major obstacle to getting fit is lack of time. If you wait for time to open up, chances are you won't be able to squeeze in a walk very often. To avoid getting sidetracked by the daily demands of life, try these tips:

- Sit down with your schedule and really carve out blocks of time. Put it in your calendar like any other appointment.
- Add physical activity to things you already do. For example, pedal a stationary bike while reading or watching TV. Or take a walk with a friend to catch up instead of calling each other on the phone.
- Plan activities you can do with your kids, such as going for bike rides or skating. Not only will you find more time for fitness, you'll help inspire your kids to move more.

### 5. Bounce Back From Setbacks

You've set a reasonable fitness goal. You've prepared for potential problems. Yet somehow you still didn't make it to the gym today as you had planned. Don't let that be your downfall. When this happens, it's time for an attitude adjustment so you don't completely lose your motivation to exercise. If you miss the gym on Monday, that doesn't mean your whole week is shot. It simply means you need to hit the gym on Tuesday or take the dog for an extra-long walk tonight. Knowing how to exercise involves learning how to use your mind to propel yourself into action and stick with a fitness routine.

