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Staying Motivated to Exercise: Tips for Older Adults

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Tips for older adults to stay motivated to exercise

Physical activity is a great way for older adults to [gain substantial health benefits and maintain independence](#). Try to make exercise a priority. Remember that being active is one of the most important things you can do each day to maintain and improve health. Try these tips to help you stay motivated to exercise.

1. Find simple ways to make exercise fun and enjoyable

Some people like to walk on a treadmill at the gym. Others find that kind of activity boring. The key to sticking with exercise is to [make it interesting and enjoyable](#). Be creative. Do things you enjoy but pick up the pace. Do all [four types of exercise](#) — endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility. The variety helps keep things interesting! Try some new activities to keep your interest alive.

2. Find ways to fit exercise into your day

You are more likely to exercise if it's a convenient part of your day. Try exercising first thing in the morning. Combine physical activity with a task that's already part of your day, such as walking the dog or doing household chores. If you don't have 30 minutes to be active, look for three 10-minute periods. As you progress, add more 10-minute sessions until you hit your goal!



[Read and share this infographic](#) to learn about tips to stay motivated to exercise.

Work out at work

There are many ways to fit physical activity into your regular schedule, even while you are at work! Look for easy ways to

add physical activity to your regular schedule:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Take a walk with co-workers during your lunch break. An exercise buddy can help you stick with your plan to be more active!
- Walk down the hall and talk with a co-worker instead of sending an e-mail.
- Park a little farther away from your office and enjoy the walk.
- Join your company's fitness center if there is one.

Search for [Move Your Way: Tips for Busy Days](#) on YouTube for more tips on fitting more activity into your day.

3. Make exercise a social activity

Many people agree that an “exercise buddy” keeps them going.

- Take a walk during lunch with coworkers.
- Try a dance class — salsa, tango, square dancing — it's up to you.
- Use family gatherings as a time to play team sports or do outdoor activities.

The Emotional Benefits of Exercise



4. Keep track of your exercise progress

The best way to stay motivated is to measure and celebrate your successes:

- [Make an exercise and physical activity plan that works for you and track your daily physical activity.](#) (PDF, 345K)
- Find new ways to increase your physical activity.
- [Keep track of your monthly progress to see improvement.](#) (PDF, 675K)
- Update your exercise plan as you progress.

Quick tip: Rewards for being active

Don't forget to build rewards into your plan. Write down something you will do for yourself when goals are achieved. Treat yourself to something special: a movie, a trip to the museum, a new audiobook, or a massage. Celebrate your successes!

Tips for coping with breaks in your exercise routine

It is normal to have life events and changes get in the way of staying active. However, there are ways to get yourself back on track. Remember, to get the most out of exercise and physical activity, they need to be a regular part of your life.

Change type	Temporary	Permanent
A change in your situation	<p>You're on vacation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Many hotels now have fitness centers. Check out the facilities where you'll be staying, and bring along your exercise clothing or equipment (resistance band, bathing suit, or walking shoes).Get out and see the sights on foot rather than just by tour bus. <p>Caring for an ill spouse is taking up much of your time:</p>	<p>Your usual exercise buddy moves away:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask another friend to go with you on your daily walk.Ask other older adults in your area where they go for walks or what physical activity resources are available nearby.Join an exercise class at your local community center or senior center. This is a great way to meet other active people. <p>You move to a new community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Check out the fitness centers, parks, and recreation associations

Change type	Temporary	Permanent
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work out to an exercise video when your spouse is napping. • Ask a family member or friend to come over so you can go for a walk. 	<p>in your new neighborhood.</p> <p>Look for activities that match your interests and abilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved!
A change in your health	<p>The flu keeps you out of action for a few weeks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait until you feel better and then start your activity again. • Gradually build back up to your previous level of activity. 	<p>You are recovering from hip or back surgery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your doctor about specific exercises and activities you can do safely when you're feeling better. • Start slowly and gradually build up your activities as you become stronger.

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- Exploring [fun ways to stay physically active](#)
- Sharing this infographic on [tips for staying motivated to exercise](#)
- Finding more [tips for healthy aging](#)

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For more information about exercise and physical activity

American Council on Exercise

888-825-3636

receptionist@acefitness.org

www.acefitness.org

American College of Sports Medicine

317-637-9200

publicinfo@acsm.org

www.acsm.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

800-232-4636

888-232-6348 (TTY)

cdcinfo@cdc.gov

www.cdc.gov

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