

MOVE MORE: GETTING STARTED

Starting a new exercise routine can indeed feel daunting, but with the right approach, you can set yourself up for success. Here are some strategic steps to guide you through this journey:

- **Assess Your Current Fitness Level:** Take some time to evaluate where you currently stand in terms of fitness. This could involve noting how often you exercise, as well as your endurance, flexibility, and strength. Understanding your baseline will help you set realistic goals.
- **Set a SMART Goal:** A SMART goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. For example, instead of saying, "I want to get fit," you might say, "I will exercise for 30 minutes at least four times a week for the next three months." This clarity keeps you focused and motivated.
- **Create a Plan:** Outline a workout schedule that fits your lifestyle. Decide which days and times you'll dedicate to exercise and what types of workouts you'll include, such as cardio, strength training, or flexibility exercises. Having a plan makes it easier to stick to your routine.
- **Start Slowly:** If you're new to exercise, it's essential to ease into your routine to avoid injury. Gradually increase the intensity and duration of your workouts as your fitness level improves.
- **Stay Flexible:** Life can be unpredictable, so be prepared to adjust your schedule and goals as necessary. If you miss a workout, don't be too hard on yourself—just get back on track as soon as you can.
- **Track Your Progress:** Keeping a journal or using a fitness app to log your workouts can help you stay accountable and motivated. Celebrate your milestones, no matter how small, to maintain enthusiasm.
- **Find Support:** Whether it's friends, family, or a fitness community, having a support system can encourage you to stick with your routine. Consider working out with a buddy or joining classes to stay engaged.
- **Stay Inspired:** Keep reminding yourself of the reasons you started. Whether it's improved health, increased energy, or a specific fitness goal, maintaining your motivation is key to long-term success.

By thinking strategically and following these steps, you can create a sustainable exercise routine that leads to meaningful and lasting change in your life. Remember, it's a journey, not a sprint—enjoy the process!

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When starting or increasing your exercise routine, consider how you can incorporate these five elements:

Aerobic

Activities that get your heart pumping.

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Go for a brisk walk during your lunch break.
- Ride your bike to nearby destinations instead of driving.
- Dance while doing household chores.
- Do a few jumping jacks during TV commercial breaks.

Strength

Lifting weights or using your body weight to help build or maintain muscle and strengthen bones.

- Use water bottles or canned goods as weights for simple exercises while watching TV.
- Do squats while waiting for food to cook.
- Incorporate push-ups against a counter or wall when you have a moment.
- Try short resistance band workouts while sitting at your desk.
- Perform Pilates moves during your morning routine.

Flexibility

Stretch your body to improve your range of motion.

- Stretch your arms and legs while watching TV or sitting at your desk.
- Incorporate a few yoga poses into your morning or evening routine.
- Practice Tai Chi movements in a quiet space at home or outdoors.
- Use a foam roller while watching videos or reading.
- Do simple warm-up stretches before getting out of bed.

Consistency

Do physical activities that you enjoy to help you stay motivated and consistent.

Safety

Check with a health care professional when starting a new exercise routine. Start slowly, and gradually increase time and intensity to prevent injury. Get professional help if formal instructions are needed.

Mayo. (n.d.-a). <https://mcforms.mayo.edu/mc4700-mc4799/mc4770-27.pdf>

MOVE MORE: SET YOUR SMART GOAL AND TRACK

My exercise goal is:

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Specific: Clearly define your goal for recognition upon achievement. **Measurable:** Set quantifiable goals; vague goals are not measurable. **Attainable:** Balance your ambitions; avoid extremes in goal-setting. **Realistic:** Ensure your goal is achievable to prevent discouragement. **Trackable:** Choose specific, measurable goals to monitor progress effectively.

Example **SMART** goal: "I will walk for 20 minutes a day, three times a week throughout January, and I will stretch my legs before each walk." This goal satisfies all components of a SMART goal.