Steps to keep your exercise routine on track



Though an active lifestyle is essential to good physical and mental health, many of us find it hard to fit regular exercise into our hectic schedules. But it doesn't have to be difficult. Staying active begins with a simple shift in attitude. Instead of thinking we HAVE to exercise or how we HATE working out, we should think about having fun. For example:

Playing more golf (ditch the cart)
Going for bike rides with the kids
Joining a hobby sports team
Getting friends together for a belly dancing class

Staying motivated

Getting started is easy. Staying motivated is the tough part. Here are some tips to keeping focused and on track.

- **Have a plan.** Think of exercise as an important appointment. Planning short, 10-minute snippets of exercise during the day, such as taking a brisk walk at lunch or taking the stairs instead of the elevator, helps break exercise goals down into manageable chunks.
- **Set small, realistic goals.** Throwing yourself into a new, vigorous activity will only make you sore and discouraged. Take things slowly. Begin by walking a bit further every day, playing tennis a little longer each game or mastering a new yoga pose.
- **Reward yourself**. If you hit all your objectives for the week, give yourself a small reward.
- **Don't beat yourself up**. Realize that there will be times when you're simply too busy or too tired to exercise. Simply get back on track as soon as you can.
- **Have an exercise buddy**. Knowing someone is expecting you at a fitness class or a morning walk keeps you accountable and motivated.
- **Involve family and friends**. By encouraging your family and friends to be more active, you'll stay on track. You'll also have people supporting you when things get tough.
- **Try new things.** It's hard to stay motivated when you're doing the same activities week after week. Try something new. Learn how to curl. Take dance classes. Sign up for paddleboard lessons.
- **Use technology.** For gaming enthusiasts, there are many fun fitness apps that let you run from zombies or save the world. Not your thing? Try downloading an audio book to make a solitary walk interesting or stream your favourite TV show on the treadmill.

For more ideas on making activity part of your everyday life, contact your assistance program for resources and support.