

# HEALTH HINTS

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## Workouts that Work for You

Finding it, fitting it, following it

I recently heard a statistic on a radio program that said 85 percent of people give up on their New Year’s resolutions every year by mid-January—the program was focused on physical activity!

It’s no wonder getting into exercise and sticking with it is so difficult. Being a part of functional society almost demands that we become sedentary. We go to work earlier and stay later. We have a vast array of other family and social commitments and responsibilities that require our time and energy. We sit at a desk or stand at a cash

register or in some other fairly immobile state most of the work day. The person who leaves his desk to go to another’s office, rather than using e-mail, is considered inefficient. We drive/ride in a car, bus, or train to get to work or anywhere else we need to go. At the end of the day, we’re tired. We’ve basically “engineered” exercise out of our lives.<sup>1</sup>

So, how in the world are we supposed to **find** an activity we can do, **fit** it into our busy schedules, and continue to **follow** it for a lifetime to stay fit and healthy?

That is the topic of this issue of HealthHints: “**find it, fit it, follow it.**” We will give you guidelines, tips, and ideas on how to:

- **find** activities you can and want to do,
- **fit** physical activity into your day and your particular lifestyle, and
- **follow** your physical activity goals for success over your lifetime.

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## First Things First

What you most need to know to make workouts work

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**A**s I began researching the latest news on physical activity, there were a few key points that stood out. I want to share these points up front so you can be thinking about them as you read this newsletter.

First, to reap the health benefits of physical activity, you need to carve out 2 1/2 hours a week in your schedule for moderate-intensity exercise. That's 30 minutes a day, five days a week. If that number overwhelms you, **don't let it stop you.** Try 20 minutes a day for three days a week, which is one hour per week. The key is to get started and maintain an active lifestyle. In fact, some other great news is that you can accumulate activity over the course of a day in 10-minute increments. So consider three 10-minute "breaks" during the day for a bit of exercise.<sup>2</sup> We'll talk more about intensity level as you read on, so don't let that scare you—you're going to move at a pace that is comfortable for you.

If you already meet these physical activity goals, try working toward 60 minutes of physical activity most or all days a week. "Building up to 60 minutes of moderate intensity [exercise] per day may further reduce the risk of weight gain over time and will provide additional health benefits."<sup>2</sup> Motivational strategies to keep you going are included later in this newsletter.

Second, enjoy what you do. Choose physical activities that you enjoy. Let's face it, if you don't enjoy doing the activities, you're not likely to keep doing them. No one but you knows what you enjoy. Think about this: physical activity does not have to be what we "traditionally" think of (e.g., gym workouts, aerobic dance, or jogging); be open to new possibilities. If you have physical limitations, don't let that stop you or your goals for greater fitness. Seek out and talk with a doctor who can help you.

Third, "variety is the spice of life" and a key to exercise maintenance. Have you heard that before? I've been guilty of thinking I had to get to the gym or hit the road running over and over and over again to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Then, guess what happened—yep, burnout, boredom, and me sitting on the couch for the next two months until I could convince myself that it wouldn't be that bad to put my jogging shoes back on or go back to the gym.

The truth is, many people who are successful at maintaining a physically active lifestyle participate in a variety of activities,<sup>1</sup> not just one. In fact, it is important that we participate in activities that build endurance, strength, flexibility, and stability/balance<sup>3</sup> to reap health benefits and have a positive life quality for a lifetime. Read on for a look at a physical activity pyramid you can follow and ideas that have helped people successfully stay active.

### Why Exercise?

Being physically active is an important aspect of getting and staying healthy. As we look toward finding workouts that work for you, let's take a quick glance at some of the benefits of regular physical activity.

#### Short-term benefits include:

- \* A healthier heart
- \* Increased endurance
- \* Healthy muscles, bones, and joints
- \* Improved burning of calories
- \* More energy
- \* Better ability to cope with stress
- \* A sense of well-being
- \* Improved ability to fall asleep and sleep well

#### Long-term benefits include reduced risk of:

- \* Dying prematurely
- \* Dying from heart disease
- \* Developing diabetes
- \* Developing high blood pressure
- \* Becoming obese
- \* Developing colon cancer<sup>4</sup>

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## Fitting Exercise into Your Life

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### I Have No Time!

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**P**lan. Simply put, you have to plan to exercise regularly. “Lack of time is the number one reason cited for not exercising.”<sup>5</sup> “To make exercise a priority, you must put it on your calendar in ink.”<sup>5</sup> Just like a business meeting, church event, or lunch with a friend, schedule physical activity into your day, and don’t schedule other meetings or allow last-minute details to crowd your workout time.<sup>5</sup>

One of the best ways to plan exercise into your day is to set your alarm clock 30 minutes earlier, and exercise first thing in the morning before your day gets hectic. If you are not a “morning person” or that doesn’t work in your day, then schedule your activity time later. Pack your exercise gear and head out for some physical activity at the end of the day, or schedule three 10-minute breaks in your work day for a brisk walk around the office. Be sure to plan options for different types of weather conditions.

Many people who are successful at maintaining physical activity choose to exercise at the same time each day,<sup>1</sup> so choosing a set time each day may be the most effective strategy. It may take a little “trial and error” at first, but find a schedule that works, and stick with it.

Most importantly, do what works for you, but be sure to put it into your daily plan.



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## Fitting Exercise into Your Routine

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### Making activity accessible

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**W**hile there are many potential barriers to physical activity participation, next to lack of time, inconvenience is the most often cited barrier.<sup>6</sup> Thus, in addition to planning activity into your day, “making activity more convenient is also an effective method of increasing activity participation.”<sup>6</sup> Going to a gym may be a potential barrier if the facility is not near your home or workplace.

Here are some ideas that may help:

- Purchase a treadmill, stationary bike, or step machine for use at home.
- Take walking shoes to work for those 10-minute fitness breaks or a brisk walk at the lunch hour.
- Consider your commute. Bike to work or plan to bike or walk from a commuter stop on your bus or train route. (Remember, this takes some planning, but if you schedule it into your daily routine, it can be an effective way to get active during your day). For more information on how to get active on your commute, see the following website: <http://commuterchoice.com>. Read more about active transportation at [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/active\\_trans.htm](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/active_trans.htm).
- Multi-task. Watch the news or your favorite television program at the gym or while using your home exercise equipment. Work out details and plan events mentally while exercising alone. Catch up with friends and family members during a bike ride or game of racquetball. Walk around the perimeter of the field at your child’s soccer or baseball game while you watch. Walk while you talk on the phone. Take the stairs instead of elevators. Walk from the furthest parking space to your workplace or to the grocery store. Better yet, walk or bike when running your errands. Use a push lawn mower instead of one that’s self-propelled.<sup>5,6</sup>

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## Fitting Exercise into Your Budget

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### Low-budget & no-budget exercise equipment

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In talking about some of the ideas for convenience, the issue of expense creeps in. Exercise does not have to be expensive. You can make some modest investments, such as:

- jump ropes,
- resistance tubing and bands,
- exercise videos, and
- dumbbells (hand-held weights).

All are effective and inexpensive pieces of exercise equipment that you can choose for use at home, work, or elsewhere.

You can also improvise by using ordinary household items:

- Make adjustable weights by filling empty milk, water, or detergent bottles with water or sand and securing the lids with duct tape.
- Use canned goods as weights. Or take a pair of tube socks and place an 8-ounce can in each sock, tying them together to make a 1 pound weight.
- Use bags of cereal, frozen peas, or bags of potatoes of varying weights to do a variety of exercises at home, such as chest presses, leg extensions, shoulder and calf raises, squats, or lunges.<sup>7</sup>

Need some other inexpensive ideas?

- Think twice about your needs. If you want to do step training—an aerobic exercise resembling stair climbing—do you really need the \$1,500 home stair stepper? Or would a fitness step or low, sturdy step stool and some step aerobic videos do the trick at a fraction of the cost?<sup>7</sup>
- Buy used equipment. Look in your local Yellow Pages for stores that specialize in used sporting goods and exercise equipment. Check your local newspapers, stores, or college-campus bulletin boards, and you'll frequently find barely used exercise equipment for sale.<sup>7</sup>

- Check out your local parks and recreation department. They frequently offer discounted fitness classes to local residents. If you live in a college town, see if the college's fitness center is available to members of the community. It often is, at a price much more reasonable than a privately owned gym. If you're an alumnus of the school, you may qualify for an even better rate.<sup>7</sup>
- Share costs with a friend. Trade exercise videos with a friend so that neither of you gets bored doing the same workout over and over again. Another option: Some personal trainers will let you split the cost of a session with a friend or two.<sup>7</sup>



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## Finding Exercise You Enjoy

Choosing what works and motivates

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Let's face it, if you don't like an activity, you probably will not maintain it. You need to find an activity that you enjoy. In the *Consumer Reports* article, "Making Workouts Work,"<sup>1</sup> Russell Pate of the University of South Carolina says:

**"Do the type of activity that you are most attracted to and will perform on the most consistent basis.... That's a function of what you enjoy and what's accessible to you, given your lifestyle and resources."**<sup>1</sup>

So, truth be known, I'd like to go downhill skiing every day. It is exhilarating, breathtaking, and fun to me. The reality—downhill skiing is expensive, and I live in a part of the country where it almost never snows, and the nearest hill is two hours away...and, by the way, it is not covered with snow.

Nevertheless, we can consider other options that can be enjoyable and do-able on a regular basis. If you still want to go skiing or to plan for some other type of activity that you can't do daily—such as mountain climbing/hiking where there are no mountains or water skiing where there is no lake—use that activity as your motivator or goal. Do other physical activities so you can be in your best physical shape when you have the opportunity to ski, hike, or climb.



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## Types of Activity to Consider

Getting the most benefit from your activity

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So what types of activity can you do? What types of activity should you choose?

To get the most benefit, you will want to include aerobic, strength, flexibility, and stability/balance building activities in your routine. As I describe these forms of activity below, don't panic! You can alternate different activities on different days of the week, and many activities encompass several or all forms of exercise.

**Aerobic** exercise is important for the proper functioning of your heart and lungs. "When you're aerobically fit, your body converts oxygen into energy more efficiently. You have more endurance and can work at a higher intensity for a longer length of time."<sup>8</sup>

If I can't breathe well and efficiently, it is going to be very hard to go downhill skiing, but more importantly, it is going to be hard to walk up a flight of stairs or do other daily tasks that require me to breathe efficiently. I want to be able to keep up with my kids and my grandkids, so keeping healthy aerobically is important for my life's goals. Think about why it is important for you to breathe efficiently, and make that your motivator to stay aerobically fit. Some examples of aerobic exercises include dance, step classes, running, bicycling, and swimming.

**Strength** training—also referred to as resistance training—is always important, but it's especially important as we age. One of the greatest myths about exercise is that we can be too old to perform strength-building exercises, such as weight or resistance training. That's simply not true. We need to create resistance against our muscles so we can build them up.

At about age 30, we begin to lose muscle mass if we don't try to build and maintain it. By the time we're 80, we can't lift 5 lbs of weight. One of the prime reasons that many older people need extra care is that they simply cannot lift much weight. They may not have enough leg strength to walk to the car or enough arm strength to help lift out of a chair.

What does that mean for our life quality? It means we cannot perform daily tasks, such as carrying a small bag of groceries, picking up a grandchild, or driving to perform our daily errands.

Muscular fitness is important, but you don't have to bench press 150 pounds or spend 90 minutes in the gym to maintain muscle mass. For most people, performing a single set of strength-training exercises that work the major muscle groups of the body two to three times per week with a weight that fatigues the muscles at about the 12th repetition is all you really need to do for an effective strength-training routine.<sup>9</sup> A few simple exercises, such as lifting weights in the range of 1–10 pounds at a rate of 1 set and 12 repetitions, are appropriate.

Try using lighter weights and doing more repetitions, working your muscles longer to improve your endurance.<sup>10</sup> If weights do not appeal to you, there are many other options, including resistance tubing and bands (elastic bands) and medicine and physioballs (see more information on this equipment later in this issue of HealthHints). Strength training and muscle toning classes may also be available to you.

**It is never too late to start strength-building exercises.** You can regain some of your muscle mass and increase your muscle endurance. "Even if you don't start until your 80s or 90s, strength conditioning will help you perform daily tasks—such as lifting grocery bags or getting up from a chair—that can become more difficult as you get older. A small change in muscle size can make a big difference in strength, which can help you remain independent."<sup>11</sup>

The other great thing about strength training is that it boosts your metabolism to increase weight loss. "Doing exercises with hand weights, elastic bands, or weight machines two or three times a week builds muscle. When you have more muscle and less fat, you'll burn more calories because muscle burns more calories than fat, even between exercise sessions."<sup>12</sup>

**Flexibility** types of exercises make it possible for you to bend your joints and muscles through their full range of motion. As we age, flexibility often diminishes. This can lead to difficulty in performing daily tasks, from reaching a high shelf in the cupboard or pantry to buttoning the back of a dress, to bending down to tie a shoe. Loss of flexibility can cause a loss of quality of life as we age. So to keep the body limber, you will want to stretch your muscles regularly and safely (see the list of resources on stretching in the Activity Resource Guide handout with this issue of HealthHints).

The great thing about stretching is that it benefits us in other ways, as well. Stretching can improve circulation, improve posture, relieve stress, and enhance coordination (preventing falls and reducing risk for other injury).<sup>13</sup> It can also be a great way to warm up your muscles before more vigorous activity or to cool down afterwards.

**Stability and balance** are associated with your body's core muscle strength—the muscles in your lower back, pelvis, hips, and abdomen. These core muscles provide the support system for almost any activity or motion your body makes. They help you maintain stability and balance during your daily activities.<sup>3</sup>

You can improve your stability and balance through core exercises that strengthen the muscles at the center of your body—the area around your trunk—where your center of gravity is located. A strong midsection helps combat poor posture and low back pain. It also helps prevent falls, especially in older adults.<sup>3</sup> Aside from a good abdominal workout, some of the latest ideas in strengthening the core muscles are the use of a physioball or BOSU ball (see more on these later in this issue of HealthHints).

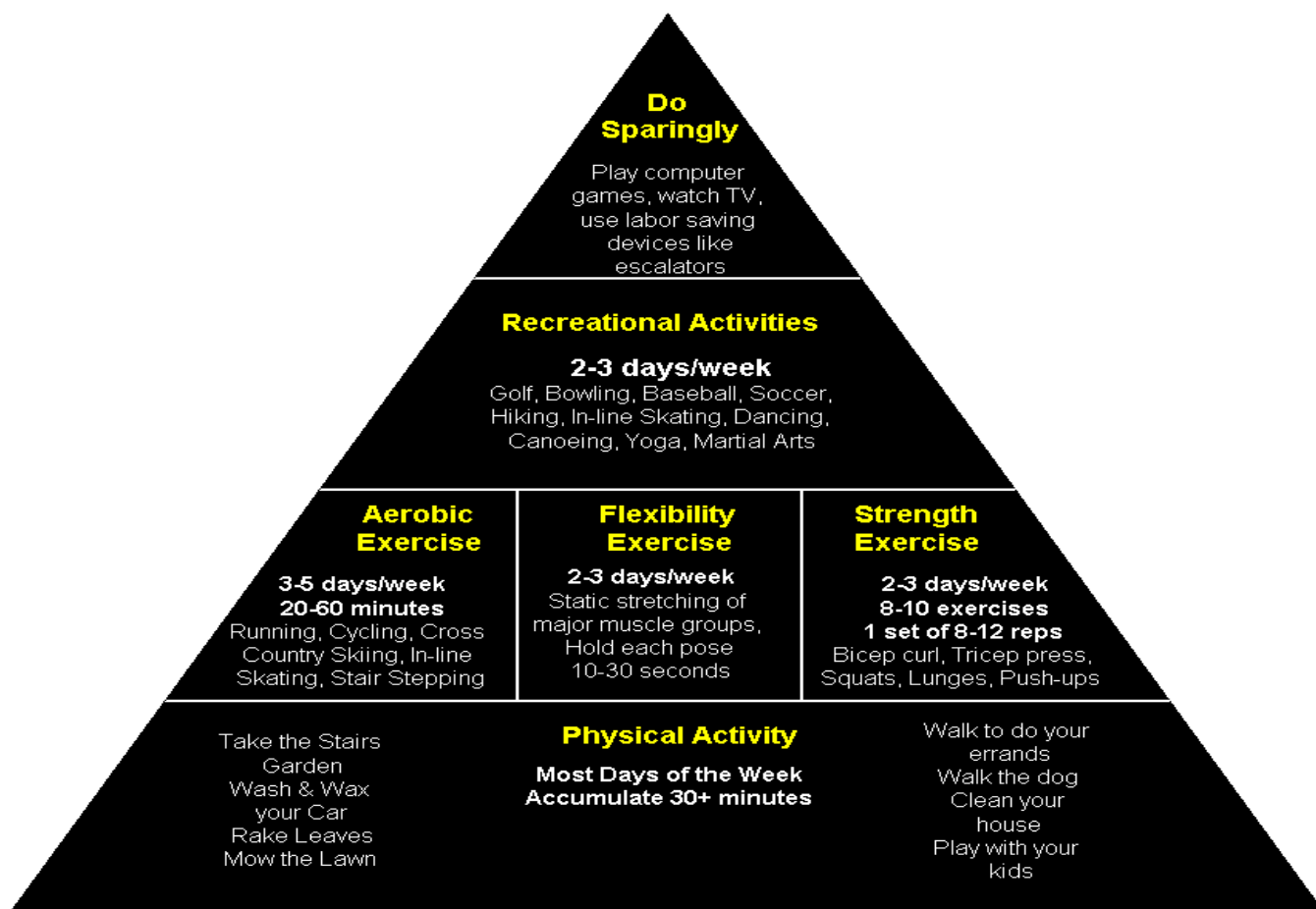


**“Whether you create your own fitness training plan or work with a personal trainer, make aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, flexibility, and core strengthening for stability and balance a part of your overall exercise plan. Factoring in these four fitness elements can help you live a longer, healthier life.”<sup>3</sup>**

**Note:** Although stability/balance exercises are not specifically listed here, strength and flexibility exercises often combine with building stability and balance. Check to be sure you are including such activities to remain active over the lifespan.

The Physical Activity Pyramid below, developed at Georgia State University,<sup>14</sup> can be a helpful guide in planning your week of activity. To begin, consider doing aerobic activity three days per week, and strength, flexibility, and stability/balance exercises two days per week. If you’re already at this level, try to boost to aerobic activity five days per week, and strength, flexibility, and stability/balance exercises three days per week.

**Fitness formula? What’s the best training program for you? See this article from the American College of Sports Medicine to help you decide and set goals for your future fitness <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/fitociety/ACSMFSPSpring04.pdf>.**



Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia by Georgia State University (1999)<sup>14</sup>

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# The Latest in Exercise

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## Trends in activity today

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**W**ant to try something different? Let's take a look at what's popular in exercise right now.

**Boot Camp:** If you ever wanted to be GI Joe or GI Jane, then this is an exercise class for you. Boot camp workouts usually take place outdoors and are based on Army-style workouts combining cardiovascular interval training, circuit training (see below), and resistance training (e.g., push-ups, sit-ups, and squats). You also usually have a highly motivating, "sergeant-style" instructor/instruction.<sup>15</sup>

**Bosu ball:** A BOSU ("BOth Sides Up") ball is an inflated rubber dome on a flat surface, which looks like a large rubber ball cut in half. It can be placed on the flat or domed side for different exercises. A BOSU class (or video) can include aerobic, strength, flexibility, and balance training. Exercises such as leg raises, crunches, and push-ups are done on the BOSU. A BOSU ball particularly helps establish and reinforce balance, stability, and core strength.<sup>16</sup>

**Circuit Training:** Circuit training takes you through a series of exercise stations, with relatively brief rest intervals in between.<sup>16</sup> In this way, you stay aerobic (keep your heart rate up) while building strength. Circuit training can be done individually or in a class setting. Ask a local trainer or doctor about a circuit that would work for you.

**Dance:** If you love to dance or just always wanted to know how, there are fun new options that may be offered by your parks and recreation department, local YMCA, or gym. The dances may include salsa, hip-hop, or even ballet.

**Interval Training:** The general idea of interval training is to vary between shorter, high-intensity activity and longer low-intensity training. Interval training can be done with many different activities—walking, jogging, cycling, treadmills, and elliptical trainers. Depending on your fitness level, you can vary the length of each interval, number of intervals, distance, and speed. Here are some examples:

- Cycle or run at high intensity (determined by your fitness level and/or your heart rate) for one minute. Follow with three minutes of lighter cycling or running. Repeat this cycle 10 times for a 40-minute workout.
- If you are walking outside, walk as fast as you can for one block, then an easier pace for two blocks.
- If you are on the elliptical machine, increase your speed and/or incline for the first minute of a song, and slow down on a flatter grade for the remainder of the song.
- If you are up for the challenge, utilize a one-to-one ratio, with three minutes at high intensity followed by three minutes at lower intensity.<sup>17</sup>

"Remember, the point is to push yourself just beyond your comfort level but not to the point of complete exhaustion or injury. Tailor the timing to what you want to accomplish. If you are a beginner jogger, interval training (alternating between jogging and walking) can be a good way to get started without having to run for 30 minutes straight."<sup>17</sup>

**Kick-boxing:** Kick-boxing introduces movements such as kicking, jumping, twisting, and punching in a safe form to create a cardiovascular workout that can be highly aerobic and motivating. Look for a class at your local gym, YMCA, or other recreational facility.



**Medicine ball:** Medicine balls are weighted rubber balls that have a hand grip on each side. They can be used to improve range of motion, core strength, coordination, flexibility, joint integrity, and upper and lower body strength.<sup>18</sup> Medicine balls are often used in rehabilitation, as well. They vary in sizes from about two pounds up to about 12 pounds. You can do medicine ball exercises with a partner or alone.

**Mind-Body Programs:** Yoga, Pilates, and tai chi are all considered “mind-body” programs, meaning that participants should be mentally focused and introspective as they perform the exercises. All three forms of exercise coordinate breathing with motion and are slower than traditional calisthenics. They are all beneficial in sustaining or gaining flexibility and strength, as well as improving balance and coordination.

Yoga, Pilates, and tai chi may also use props. Yoga is more loosely structured, while Pilates is more regimented, done in sets and reps in an ordered precision.<sup>19</sup> Tai chi is a series of soft, flowing movements choreographed into a slow routine, with each specific movement corresponding to the inhalation or exhalation of a deep, gentle breath. Different styles of tai chi use distinctive paces, stances, and movements.<sup>20</sup>

**Physioball/Swiss ball:** “Physio” or “Swiss” ball training utilizes a large rubber ball that participants balance on while performing different exercises, particularly to strengthen the core (abdominal, back, and trunk) muscles. The idea of the physioball is to prepare you for the “multi-planar” activities of sports and daily life. Typical resistance training involves working a single joint in a single plane of motion (e.g., bicep curls), while physioball training uses exercises that involve muscular control more specific to athletic and daily activities (e.g., carrying a box down a flight of stairs). Training on a physioball is excellent for strengthening the core muscles, as well as improving balance, posture, coordination, and flexibility.<sup>21</sup> You can incorporate a physioball into a home or gym routine. Classes and video instruction are available.

**Resistance Bands and Tubing:** Resistance bands and tubing are simply pieces of elastic band and tubing designed for pushing and pulling to create resistance in exercise. They are a good, convenient, and affordable way to add strength and flexibility training to any workout routine. They can be easily packed and taken along. Resistance bands and tubing allow you to move freely, achieve a greater range of motion, and create resistance from all directions (overhead, side, below, etc.). The most stretchable bands create lighter resistance, while the harder-to-stretch bands create greater resistance. Bands allow you to mimic movements that you use in real life, so if you want to improve your golf swing or tennis game, you can perform the exact motions needed against resistance. You can work every muscle in the body using bands and tubing, so the possibilities are endless.<sup>22</sup> Look for a video, or ask your doctor or local trainer about how to best use resistance bands and tubing.

**Spinning:** Spinning is an intense cardiovascular workout on a specially designed stationary bike. Spinning classes are lead by certified instructors who guide you through when to adjust your speed and resistance level. Often, the workout will be set to music and use visualization techniques.<sup>16</sup>



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## Variety vs. Monotony

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### Traditional or trendy

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Whether you choose the latest trend in physical activity or traditional fitness activities, keep in mind that varying your activity can help to keep you motivated and act as a boredom buster.<sup>23</sup> So, think about the exercises you can do, and choose two or three you would like to try. Write them on your calendar and try them out. Physical activity does not have to be strenuous or monotonous. If your most enjoyable activity is talking with friends, watching television, or listening to music, you can be physically active during these activities. You can participate in a spinning class or play ping-pong for physical activity if you'd like.

Here are some other ideas to consider:

- Walk. It is the most recommended activity by doctors for people who have been sedentary. It is also the favored activity of many who are successful at maintaining activity.<sup>1</sup> Try mall walking when the weather is bad. Walk when you talk on the phone or around the field while your child plays baseball, softball, or soccer.
- Race-walk.
- Jog.
- Work in your garden.
- Train for a race (walking, jogging, or cycling) or fundraiser, like March of Dimes, Breast Cancer Awareness, etc.
- Step up and down on an aerobic step or sturdy stool while watching television.
- Join a motivating program, such as Walk Across Texas (<http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>), where you record your activity to keep you moving. Ask your local parks and recreation department, YMCA, or local gym about programs they offer.
- Hike. Find a trail in your community—you don't have to live in a mountainous area.
- Walk your property or fence line if you live in a rural area that allows for this. Mark your distance on a fence post, and see if you can go a little further each time.
- Participate in martial arts classes.

- Try a rock-climbing class, offered now in many areas on a rock wall engineered with hand grips and footholds.
- Get involved in aquatic exercise: swimming, water aerobics, water walking, and water sports. Aquatic exercise is great for people with joint problems.
- Bicycle. Do this for fun or for quick errands. Attach a bag or basket for errands that require carrying goods.
- Roller skate, roller blade, ice skate, or skateboard.
- Play tennis, racquetball, handball, or badminton.
- Play golf. Walk and carry your own bag.
- Go dancing—line dancing, folk dancing, ballroom dancing, hip-hop—you choose.
- Join a jazzercise class.
- Go canoeing.
- Join a community sports team or club: basketball, soccer, hockey, volleyball, baseball, softball, cycling club, swimming club, etc.
- Play as a family or with friends. Have a neighborhood softball game in the front yard (use a wiffle ball and a plastic bat to avoid injuries or broken windows, etc.). Play basketball at a park or in your driveway. Have an after-dinner walk each evening or a pre-dinner bicycle ride. Exercise with friends to stay in touch.

The possibilities are endless. Use your imagination, and do what you think is fun.

Note: If you have some type of physical condition or impairment that you believe limits or would prevent you from being physically active, the first thing you need to do is talk with your doctor. Ask him/her specifically about what your limitations are and how you might become more physically fit. For individuals with physical conditions, there are wonderful, motivating health practitioners who can help design a program specifically for you. Tell them your likes and dislikes, and ask them to adapt to your needs to make the activity as enjoyable—and even fun—as possible. There are amazing sports and activities that individuals with physical conditions can be involved in. Downhill skiing is even available to those with paralyzed lower limbs, so don't limit your imagination; ask and find out if what you enjoy is possible. (See "Sports and Recreation for People with Disabilities" in the Activity Resource Guide.)

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## Pace Yourself

How intense does activity need to be?

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**Y**ou need to be active at a moderate intensity to gain health benefits from aerobic activity. But what does it mean to be moderately intense? It means you need to get your heart rate up to a certain level called your target heart rate. What does that mean? It really doesn't have to be complicated. There is a formula for finding your target heart rate, which is shown in the box on page 12. The reality is that stopping to find out if you are working at the appropriate intensity level by checking your heart rate isn't convenient.

Here are some other ways to help you decide if you are working at a moderate intensity level:

**Take the talk test.** If you can talk easily while performing the activity, you are working at a light to moderate level. You may want to increase the rate of exercise slightly to make it more moderately intense. If you become out of breath quickly and find it very difficult to talk while performing the activity, you are probably working more vigorously.<sup>4</sup> Slow it down slightly to be at a moderate level of intensity. Remember, exercise does not have to be strenuous to be beneficial. The idea of “no pain, no gain” is not true. It may not be easy at first, but exercise should not be painful.

**Take the sweat test.** Regular, repetitive physical activity for 30 minutes at a moderate intensity level will probably induce sweating.<sup>24</sup> Everyone is different—some people sweat more and others less, but if you begin to work up a sweat, you are probably working at least at a level of moderate intensity.

**Consider a brisk walk.** Walk at the level you would consider to be a “brisk walk.” Moderate activity is anything that makes you breathe as hard as you do during a brisk walk.<sup>25</sup> A brisk walk at 4 mph is considered a moderate intensity activity.<sup>26</sup>

Other activities that are considered moderate in intensity are:

- leisure biking,
- water aerobics,
- tai chi,
- dancing,
- vacuuming,
- scrubbing floors,
- moving furniture,
- laying carpet,
- house painting, and
- washing windows.<sup>26</sup>

For a more extensive list of moderate-level activities, see [http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED\\_6\\_1X\\_Be\\_Physically\\_Active\\_Achieve\\_and\\_Maintain\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Weight.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_6_1X_Be_Physically_Active_Achieve_and_Maintain_a_Healthy_Weight.asp).

If you are just starting to exercise, it is important to start slowly and pace yourself. People are all different shapes and sizes. They are also at many different fitness levels. It is important to work at a pace/intensity level where you are comfortable. A recent study found that activity was considered more laborious and less pleasant among overweight adults when its intensity was prescribed (at a level just 10 percent higher than what the individuals self-selected).<sup>27</sup> Don't impose an intensity on your activity that makes the activity unenjoyable. Select a pace that works for you; otherwise, you may find your enjoyment, motivation, and adherence to exercise diminishing.<sup>27</sup> If you want to join a class but feel the intensity level is too high, talk with the instructor about how to work at your level. Instruction usually includes options for those who want to work at a high, medium, or low intensity levels.



## Want to Find Your Target Heart Rate?

“The easiest way to check your heart rate is to count your heartbeats for six seconds right after an exercise session, and multiply that number by 10 to find the number of heartbeats in a minute. To count your heartbeats, place the tips of your middle and index fingers (don’t use your thumb) on your throat to one side of your Adam’s apple or on the inside of your wrist. As soon as you feel your pulse, start counting the beats for six seconds. Multiply the number of beats by 10. If your rate is below or above your target heart rate range, adjust your exercise by making it more or less strenuous.”<sup>11</sup>

The table below shows estimated target heart rates for different ages. Look for the age category closest to yours; then read across to find your target heart rate.

Age	Target HR Zone 50-75%	Average Maximum Heart Rate 100%
20 years	100-150 beats per minute	200 beats per minute
25 years	98-146 beats per minute	195 beats per minute
30 years	95-142 beats per minute	190 beats per minute
35 years	93-138 beats per minute	185 beats per minute
40 years	90-135 beats per minute	180 beats per minute
45 years	88-131 beats per minute	175 beats per minute
50 years	85-127 beats per minute	170 beats per minute
55 years	83-123 beats per minute	165 beats per minute
60 years	80-120 beats per minute	160 beats per minute
65 years	78-116 beats per minute	155 beats per minute
70 years	75-113 beats per minute	150 beats per minute

Your maximum heart rate is about 220 minus your age. The figures above are averages, so use them as general guidelines.<sup>28</sup>

When starting an exercise program, aim at the lowest part of your target zone (50 percent) during the first few weeks. Gradually build up to the higher part of your target zone (75 percent). After six months or more of regular exercise, you may be able to exercise comfortably at up to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate. However, you don’t have to exercise that hard to stay in shape.”<sup>28</sup>

Note: A few high blood pressure medications lower the maximum heart rate and thus the target zone. If you’re taking such medicine, call your physician to find out if you need to use a lower target heart rate.<sup>28</sup>



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## Following It... Exercise Anytime, Anywhere

Travel and office options for activity

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Let's face it, sitting at a desk all day can promote a sedentary lifestyle. Don't let your work be your excuse. Here are some ideas from Paige Waehner, ACE certified personal trainer and freelance writer for About.com, that can help:

- Sit on an exercise ball instead of a chair. This will strengthen your abs and back, and you'll work on your posture without even trying.
- Set an alarm to go off every hour to remind you to stand up and move around. Even if you just swing your arms or take a deep breath, you'll feel more alert.
- Use the restroom on another floor, and take the stairs.
- Use a pedometer and keep track of how many steps you take. Aim for 6,000 to 10,000 steps a day.
- Leave something important in your car (your lunch, your briefcase, etc.) so you have to run out to get it (and take the stairs).
- Deliver documents or messages to co-workers in person rather than by e-mail.
- Go to the mall for lunch, and park on the opposite end of the food court. Don't forget to buy something healthy.
- Get a headset for your phone so you can move around while you talk.

If you have your own office, consider keeping a resistance band or a couple of sets of dumbbells in your desk drawer. You can squeeze in some quick upper body exercises while you're on the phone. If you work in a cubicle or don't want people to see you exercising at your desk, all you really need is a chair and a couple of large, full water bottles that you can use for any dumbbell exercise.<sup>29</sup>

For pictorial guidelines of exercises you can do at your desk, see the following websites:

Desk Exercises (from Harvard Medical School's Consumer Health Information site)  
<http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH/WSIHW000/9105/8254.html>

Office Stretches (from ABC News)  
<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Atio/popup?id=1445618&content=&page=1>

Office Exercise (from Paige Waehner, ACE certified personal trainer and freelance writer for About.com)  
<http://exercise.about.com/cs/exerciseworkouts/l/bofficeworkout.htm>

Stretches You Can Do in Your Office (slide show from the Mayo Clinic)  
<http://mayoclinic.com/health/stretching/WL00030>

Another challenge of the job can be travel. If your job frequently takes you out of town, keeping up with your exercise routine can be a challenge. Below are some ideas that may help.

Pack a jump-rope, swimsuit, exercise video, or resistance bands to use in your room/lodging. You can also do simple calisthenics, such as jumping jacks or marching in place. Complement your aerobic workout with some strength training. Using your own body as weight is most convenient. The following exercises are easy to do in your hotel room:

- sit-ups or crunches for your abdominal muscles;
- push-ups for your arms, chest, and shoulders;
- mini-squats for your thighs;
- lunges for your legs and buttocks; and
- calf rises for the calf muscles in the back of your lower legs.

When you've finished your workout, don't forget to stretch. Bring along a portable music player or personal radio to keep you moving. You'll want to perform this activity in your room, since you need to hear what's going on around you, such as traffic, when outdoors.<sup>30</sup>

If traveling by plane, wear your walking shoes. Use extra time in the airport terminal to walk. (Check your bags early, or place your carry-on luggage in a locker.)

If traveling by train, walk through the cars, and walk outside when the train is stopped to let other passengers board.

If traveling by car, stop every hour to stretch and/or walk around the car a few times.<sup>30</sup>

Call your place of lodging before leaving for your trip. Ask about in-house fitness facilities, swimming pool, and the safety and accessibility of outdoor fitness around the lodging and surrounding area. Ask if there is a video player in the room if you plan to bring an exercise video. Find out if there is a television channel that offers fitness programs.

Although business trips can be fraught with time-crunched schedules, meetings, and lunches, exercise can be an important part of doing your best work. It is a great stress reliever and may help you concentrate better, sleep better, and give you the energy to be more productive.<sup>31</sup>

Note: If jet lag and travel time have left you exhausted, let your body rest. A common concern among exercisers is that they will suffer a reduction in their fitness level if they are unable to squeeze in some exercise. “It is important to recognize that it is much easier to maintain your current level of fitness than it is to improve your fitness level. Current evidence suggests that you can take up to a week off from exercise training without any significant reduction in your fitness level.”<sup>31</sup> If you are on a long trip and crunched for time, try a regimen of either aerobic or strength training (or a combination of these) twice a week.<sup>31</sup> Then go back to your regular schedule when you return home.



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## Following It... Making It Stick

Simple strategies to keep you moving forward

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Once you have made the initial change and begun to exercise, the tricky part is sticking with it. Following a pattern of physical activity over a lifetime, for most, is a challenge. Keeping motivated is a key component to staying active—and staying healthy.

The following are some strategies that have helped others and may help you to keep going when you feel like quitting. Everyone is different, so do what motivates you.

- List reasons you want or need to exercise.
- List the pros and cons/benefits and barriers. (If you have true health/physical barriers, see your doctor about ways to get fit.)
- When you feel unmotivated, refer to the list of reasons why you need to exercise and benefits of physical activity.
- Set goals—short-term and long-term.
- Reward yourself. Try placing a quarter into a jar after every workout (or whatever you can afford). When you meet your goal, treat yourself to a movie, healthy dinner out, or other purchase of your choice.
- Add a little competition. Give each family member a token each time they exercise. The family member with the most tokens at the end of a set time gets to choose the next family outing. Choose a race or fun-run/walk as a long-term goal; join a 6-, 8- or 12-week challenge program at your local fitness facility; join Walk Across Texas at <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.
- Exercise at the same time every day.
- Exercise near your home or work.
- Exercise outdoors.
- Join a health club.
- Find a training partner. Exercise with a family member, friend, or even your dog (dogs are great companions and won't hesitate to take you outdoors).
- Watch, listen to, or read inspirational materials while you exercise.
- Watch the news or your favorite television program during your workouts.

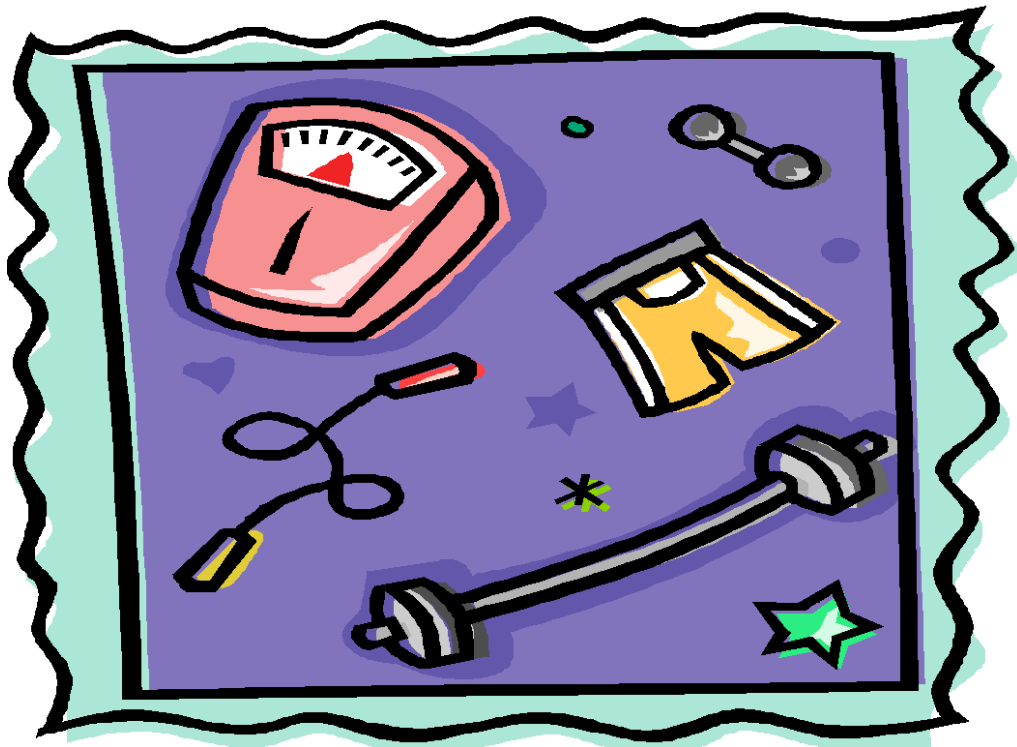
- Weigh yourself.
- Listen to music while you workout. (For safety purposes, however, do not use headphones outdoors—you need to be listening for traffic and be aware of other people.)
- Play active games with your kids—skate, swim, ride bikes, have a game of wiffle ball in your front or backyard, shoot some hoops, play tag, play red-light green-light, etc.
- Add variety to your exercise routine. Change what you do to keep boredom at bay.
- Keep an activity journal/log to track your progress, help you set goals, and identify the activities you like best.<sup>1,14,32,33,34</sup>

## The Bottom Line on Weight Control

Most of us want to lose weight, in addition to getting and feeling more fit. “To lose weight, you simply need to create a calorie deficit by eating slightly smaller portions of your standard foods. You can do the math: one pound of fat equates to 3,500 calories. By eating only 100 fewer calories per day, you can save 36,500 calories per year... and lose 10 pounds of body fat by simply eating the equivalent of two fewer Oreos per day. Sound reasonable?”<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, “about two-thirds of the people who try to lose weight by cutting calories without exercising gain the weight back within a year. Dieting slows your metabolism. This makes your body burn fat more slowly and makes it harder to lose weight. There are many benefits to a regular exercise program. Exercise speeds up metabolism, which helps you lose pounds... The key to weight control is a blend of proper eating habits and regular, moderate exercise.”<sup>36</sup>

See the Food Guide Pyramid at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/> to help you select healthy foods and appropriate portion sizes for a healthy weight. You can see other great resources for ideas on balancing exercise and nutrition on page 16.



## Keep On Moving

“Research shows that if you can exercise regularly for six months, you have made a change that can easily last a lifetime.”<sup>37</sup> Try setting short-term fitness goals, with a long-term goal to reach six months of regular physical activity. Plan to reward yourself!

“Keep in mind that if you stop doing aerobic exercise for more than two weeks or so, you will start to lose some of the health benefits you have gained.”<sup>11</sup> “...When you stop exercising, you lose all improvements in the functioning of your lungs in as few as 3 months.”<sup>24</sup> But stopping exercise for just one week won’t create a significant reduction in your fitness level.<sup>31</sup> So don’t worry if you have to take a short break from your routine. “To stay at your more fit level, stick with your aerobic exercise program. Vary your workouts so you won’t get bored. Jog or walk briskly a few times each week; swim for a couple of days, and then use a stationary bike or rowing machine for the remaining days of the week. Do an aerobics routine with a video. Think of ways to modify your routine to keep you motivated.”<sup>11</sup> Alternate aerobic activity with days of strength, flexibility, and stability/balance building activities. Combine these forms of activity where you can to be more efficient with your time.

“One of the keys to staying on track is finding some activities you like to do. If you keep finding excuses not to exercise, think about why. Are your goals realistic? Do you need a change in activity? Would another time be more convenient? Keep trying until you find a routine that works for you. Once you make physical activity a habit, you’ll wonder how you lived without it.”<sup>12</sup>

## Balancing Exercise and Nutrition

Proper nutrition is equally important to your health as is regular physical activity. Here are a few nutrition resources you might like to read to help you as you work toward overall health:

Establishing Eating Essentials for Weight Loss (and more on effective weight management from the American College of Sports Medicine’s “Fit Society Page”) at <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/fitsociety/fitsoc0704.pdf>.

Think Twice before Jumping on the Low Carbohydrate Bandwagon (and more on nutrition from the American College of Sports Medicine’s “Fit Society Page”) at <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/fitsociety/ACSMFitSocFall03.pdf>.

Portion Control for Weight Loss (a slide show from the Mayo Clinic) at <http://mayoclinic.com/health/portion-control/NU00267>.



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# Activity Resource Guide

**R**eady to try a new activity or improve upon an old one? The following is a resource guide to proper techniques and equipment when participating in an array of different activities, as well as some sample schedules for walking, running, and other exercise routines.

Balance Exercises Improve Stability, Help Prevent Falls: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/balance-exercises/SM00049>

Building Strength Safely: Focus on Proper Technique in Resistance Training: <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/fitsociety/fitsc402.pdf>

Core Exercises with a Fitness Ball: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/core-strength/SM00046>

Downhill Skiing: Exercises to Enhance Your Endurance: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/downhill-skiing/SM00073>

Exercises for Osteoporosis: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/osteoporosis/WO00048>

Exercises to Prepare for Childbirth: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/pregnancy/PR00092>

*Galloway's Book on Running, 2nd Edition* by Jeff Galloway (book for order at most local bookstores)

*Getting in Shape: 32 Workout Programs for Lifelong Fitness* by Bob Anderson, Bill Pearl, and Ed Burke (book for order at most local bookstores)

*Getting Stronger Weight Training for Sports* by Bill Pearl (book for order at most local bookstores)

Golf Stretches Prevent Injuries, Improve Your Game: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/golf-stretches/SM00089>

Hiking: Take Steps to Enjoy the Great Outdoors: <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/fitsociety/fitsoc0705.pdf>

How to Stretch Your Major Muscle Groups: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/stretching/SM00043>

*Marathon: You Can Do It!* by Jeff Galloway (book for order at most local bookstores)

*Mayo Clinic Fitness for Everybody* (book for order): <http://mayoclinic.com/health/fitness-book/GA00036>

Outdoor Winter Sports: Get Fit to Play: <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/fitsociety/fitsc402.pdf>

Physical Activity in Your Daily Life: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2155>

Preparing for Hiking and Rock Climbing at Higher Altitudes: <http://acsm.org/pdf/fitsc202.pdf>

Recreation or Race: Cycling Takes You to Great Outdoors: <http://acsm.org/pdf/fitsc202.pdf>



Running and Walking Form: <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/fitsociety/fitsoc0705.pdf>

Sample 10-Week Walking Schedule for Beginners: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/walking/SM00060>

Selecting and Effectively Using Free Weights: <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/FreeWeightsbrochure.pdf>

Selecting and Effectively Using a Health/Fitness Facility: <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/SEUHFFbrochure.pdf>

Selecting and Effectively Using Home Weights: <http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/homeweig.pdf>

Selecting and Effectively Using a Home Treadmill: [http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR\\_4.pdf](http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR_4.pdf)

Selecting and Effectively Using an Elliptical Trainer: [http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR\\_1.pdf](http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR_1.pdf)

Selecting and Effectively Using Stationary Bicycles: [http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR\\_3.pdf](http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR_3.pdf)

Selecting and Effectively Using a Stair Stepper/Stair Climber: [http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR\\_2.pdf](http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/0380GNBR_2.pdf)

Selecting and Effectively Using a Rowing Machine: [http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/SEURM\\_flat.pdf](http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/SEURM_flat.pdf)

Selecting and Effectively Using a Personal Trainer: [http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/SEUPT\\_0105.pdf](http://acsm.org/health+fitness/pdf/brochures/SEUPT_0105.pdf)



Sports and Recreation for People with Disabilities: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/exercise/SM00054>

*Stretching* by Bob Anderson (book for order at most local bookstores)

*Stretching in the Office* by Bob Anderson (book for order at most local bookstores)

Swimming for Fitness? Avoid Rotator Cuff Injuries: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/rotator-cuff-injury/SM00072>

Training for a 5K Fun Run: A Schedule to Help You Reach the Finish Line: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/5k-run/SM00061>

Try a Different Golf Grip to Deal with the Yips: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/yips/SM00051>

Weight Training Exercises to Work Your Major Muscle Groups: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/weight-training/SM00041>

Your Daily Back Routine: [http://mayoclinic.com/health/back-pain/LB00001\\_D](http://mayoclinic.com/health/back-pain/LB00001_D)