

HOW TO MAKE EXERCISE A REGULAR HABIT

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Regular exercise has long been identified as an essential element of good health. Despite this fact, many struggle to make exercise a regular habit. Below are some helpful tips that can help individuals stick with an exercise program.

Make Exercise Convenient: Incorporating regular exercise into a busy life necessitates some planning and sacrifice so it becomes a priority. This may require scheduling exercise into everyday routines and/or making regular exercise as convenient as possible, thereby increasing the likelihood that it remains a priority. Exercise does not need to be time consuming. Regular bouts of exercise for as little as 30 minutes a day can have a positive impact on health.



Make Exercise Safe: An exercise that may be considered safe for one individual may not be safe for another due to age, physical limitations, and other health concerns. If you are not sure where to start, consult with a knowledgeable health care provider who can assist in choosing activities that are appropriate for you. If you have been inactive for a period of time, gradually ease into activity and take it slow.

Make Exercise Fun: Individuals should choose a range of exercise activities that they enjoy. Performing these activities with a workout buddy, friend, or family member also results in the exercise being more satisfying. Those individuals who choose fitness and recreational activities they enjoy are more likely to be consistent with those activities. Having another individual to share this with also increases the likelihood that you will continue with the exercise activity.

Make Exercise Feel Good: Not only does exercise make you physically stronger; it also has the benefits of releasing excess tension, building self-esteem, and stimulating the body's natural "feel good" chemicals called endorphins. Although there may be some initial physical discomfort when beginning a new exercise program, this may be your body's normal response when starting a new activity and should not last more than one to two weeks. If discomfort or pain persists beyond this point, seek advice from an experienced individual to make sure the exercise you are performing is appropriate and being done correctly.



Make Exercise Practical: Individuals beginning an exercise program need to have realistic expectations about the amount of time they can invest, the activities they will enjoy engaging in, and the physical and psychological benefits they expect to experience.

Regular exercise leads to tremendous health benefits that can be initiated by individuals of any age or shape. For more information on health, wellness, and exercise, visit www.nhwc.ca.

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