

Fitness: Getting Around Barriers to Exercise

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Overview

Most people struggle at times with getting active—and with staying active over time. All kinds of things can get in the way. And those roadblocks can be different for everyone. But there are steps you can take to get past your barriers to being active. Here's how.

1. Find out what is holding you back from being active.

You probably already know some of your barriers to getting and staying active. Maybe you feel stressed, or you're too busy. Or maybe you just don't feel up to it. And maybe there are things you didn't realize were holding you back.

So give it some thought, and then write down your barriers to being active. When you know what's holding you back, it will be easier to figure out how to get past those things.

2. Think of ways to get past your barriers.

It may help to come up with some new ideas for getting around your barriers. It might take a little time, but you can find a solution that works for you.

Here are some common roadblocks, along with ideas for getting past them.

- *"I don't have time."*—Try doing short chunks of activity throughout the day, like 10-minute walks.
- *"I'm stressed."*—Exercise can help relieve stress. Find easy ways to add activity to routines you already have, like taking a walk after meals.
- *"I don't have enough energy."*—Remember that exercise may actually improve your energy after you get started.
- *"I'm too overweight."*—It's okay to start with a small, simple goal that's easy to reach, like a 5-minute walk after breakfast. Even a little bit adds up over time.
- *"I don't like to exercise around other people."*—Find ways to exercise at home, like getting a workout DVD.
- *"I don't have the money to join a gym."*—You can get an exercise DVD from the library or take walks near your house.

Do any of these ideas sound like something you could try? Maybe they'll spark some new ideas of your own. Take a minute to think about ways to get past your roadblocks. You can start by writing down the main things that keep you from being active. Try to think of solutions, and write those down too.

3. Decide what barrier to work on first.

When you're ready, pick one thing you'll work on this week. Think of it as a small step toward a bigger goal.

4. Stay on track.

If you feel stuck or need help staying with an activity, here are some ideas.

- Keep a journal to track your activity.
- Schedule your workouts with a calendar or an app on your phone.
- Make it fun. Find activities you enjoy. Or work out with a friend.
- Make being active easy. Do convenient workouts, like walks near your home. Fit in a few very short workouts throughout your day.
- Make being active a habit. Add exercise to existing routines, like walking after meals. Make your favorite activity a ritual you do every day.
- Enjoy the rewards. You probably know that exercise has many long-term health benefits. But it can give you immediate rewards too. You'll have more energy, be less stressed, and feel your best.

Credits

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