

6 Ways to Make Exercise a Priority

By Alana Brager | For Active.com



Exercise shouldn't feel like a chore or something that has to be checked off your to do list. It should be a priority and an activity that fits into your daily routine, just like brushing your teeth or taking out the trash. However, kick-starting your workout regimen can be a challenge because there will always be some excuse or activity that gets in the way of taking care of yourself. Whether you're busy with carpool or working a 10-hour day, making exercise a priority is something that's beneficial to you and your own body. There are countless times when we say we're going to take up the latest [bootcamp class](#) or head out for a 3-mile run around the neighborhood. However most people don't actually do it. It's easy to get distracted and even easier to give up if we're not seeing results as fast as we would like. The thrill of starting something new and challenging can dissipate over time if you don't stick with your plan.

Here are six ways to make exercise a priority.

Start Slow

We're all guilty of throwing ourselves into some new fad workout; but then finding ourselves bored and itching for something new, again and again. It's important to start slow with something that you know you like to do, such as running or even walking.

If you have free time in the afternoon, head out for a nice jog or a brisk walk with a friend. Make your physical activity a time to have good conversation. This can help entice you to continue with your routine because you won't view it as something you have to do, but rather something you want to do. Working out with a friend will be something that you look forward to and who knows, maybe you'll push each other to train for a local 10K or even a [half-marathon](#).

Reasonable Goals

Going from zero to 60 is never a solid way to start a new routine, mainly because you'll burn yourself out quite fast. It's important to set realistic and reasonable goals that you know you can accomplish. For example, "I will wake up every morning at 5 a.m. and run 2-miles" is most likely not a practical task for anyone; and you don't want to feel guilty for not meeting your goal. A reasonable goal in sight is the way to go and you're sure to not be disappointed.

Designate Certain Days and Times

Plan to exercise at a certain time each day so it becomes a part of your schedule. If you know at two pm you have your favorite Pilates class, or made plans to meet a friend for an afternoon jog, stick with it. Planning your workouts ahead of time allows you to have something to look forward to and, like stated above; having a reasonable goal is essential in accomplishing them. If you don't set up some sort of plan, it's easy to back down and procrastinate. But who wants to back down on their health? Schedule your activity by putting it in your phone, writing it on your fridge or even having a friend bombard you with annoying text messages until you get yourself going. You'll feel refreshed, invigorated and happy that you chose to dedicate an hour to yourself and health.

Change It Up

Doing a steady 45 minutes on the elliptical can get boring, so it's OK to change up your routine every few weeks to [keep your workouts interesting](#). You don't want to hit a fitness plateau and then give up all together.

Enroll in a Zumba dance class, lift heavier weights and alternate between a light jog and sprints for your treadmill routine. Also, don't be afraid to take your workout outside of the gym. Mother nature offers more than enough resources for you to use in order to get a butt-kicking workout. Why not hike your local mountains, ride your bike around the park, run on the beach and take a tennis lesson at the local courts. If you keep your workouts exciting, you'll probably never want to stop.

Reward Yourself

Rewarding yourself is a great incentive to work out even harder, especially since it's very easy to lose sight of your ultimate goal, and let's face it, we all lack motivation at some point. Reward yourself for reaching a certain goal by getting a massage or purchase those new Nike shoes you've been dying to have. Little gifts for yourself can move you to do better and ultimately achieve more.

Never Give Up

No matter the circumstance, never stop running towards what you want to achieve. A healthy lifestyle is forever, not something that happens for a year and then dissipates. If you're taking control of your own body and health, stick with it. It's OK to have an off day and want to be lazy, but it's important to fight through the stress, the long days and busy schedules. Push through your workouts and your journey to a healthier lifestyle. Fight for your right to be fit and fabulous.