

10 TIPS FOR TURNING EXERCISE INTENTIONS ...into actions

#1

MAKE IT COMFORTABLE...AT LEAST AT FIRST



Positive feelings during exercise predict the continuation of a physical activity program. Keep your own pace when you exercise. It is more important to feel comfortable than to push yourself.

#2

FIND THE DAILY BENEFITS

Motivation based on stress-relief, mood management, and anxiety reduction achieved after physical activity is a more powerful motivator than its long-term benefits. Find the benefits in exercise for each day and be confident that other improvements will follow in time.



#3

MAKE IT SOCIAL, CHALLENGING OR ENJOYABLE



To stick with an exercise routine, you need to find ways to overcome boredom. Do this by making physical activity a part of your social life (walks with a friend), finding activities that challenge you, or by linking activities you enjoy with physical activity (reading, watching TV).

#4

DO IT WHERE YOU LIVE OR WORK

Make sure you have activities that you can do close to home when time is limited or the weather is bad. These can include local walking routes, a local exercise facility or even home equipment.



#5

CREATE A DETAILED PLAN



Plan what, where, when and how you will do your physical activity. Schedule physical activity as an appointment in your calendar. People who make highly detailed plans are more likely to implement those plans.

#6

MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

Research shows that monitoring progress is the single most powerful technique for sticking to a new behaviour over time. Keeping track of your exercise helps you to stay on course, adjust to set-backs, and makes you less likely to lose connection with your initial intentions.



#7

ACCEPT & OVERCOME BARRIERS



Accept that you will not always achieve your physical activity goals and that on some days you might have priorities other than physical activity. Analyze what went wrong on any given day and identify strategies to ensure that it doesn't happen too often.

#8

COMBINE IT WITH AN EXISTING HABIT

Make exercise a habit by doing the activity after an established habit. This could mean a workout after work, a walk after dinner or a bike ride after morning coffee.



#9

MAKE IT PART OF A CURRENT IDENTITY



Expand your existing identities to embrace physical activity. Being an active spouse, physical activity supporting parent, or dog walker are all identities that build upon existing general identities. Shaping an existing identity is the fastest way to add physical activity to your life.

#10

PRIORITIZE & PROMOTE YOUR EXERCISE IDENTITY

Place "active person" on your list of identities and make this known through photos, self and social declarations. Embracing a physical activity identity leads to a life shaped by that identity—especially if we make it a higher identity on our list than activities that serve less value in our lives.

