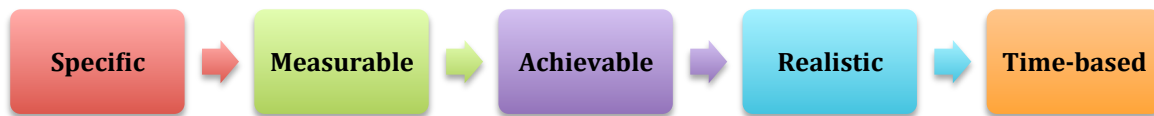


Making Time for Physical Activity

As working adults, we have so much on our to-do lists that fitting exercise into an already packed schedule can seem like a gargantuan task at times. For many of us, going to the gym to exercise for an hour or two every day is simply not a feasible option. The good news is, there are many other ways to fit physical activity into your life, and you can derive physical and mental health benefits from even small amounts of activity. So, where do you start? Here are a few suggestions:

- Start by setting some small, manageable goals that lay out exactly what you want to accomplish, and then put it on your calendar. If it's not planned into your day ahead of time, something else will come up and fill that time. Many working adults find exercising first thing in the morning is a great solution, because then it's done early and they feel great for the rest of the day!

Make sure your goals are "SMART":



- Write your goals down and post them in a visible place. Then, monitor your progress and hold yourself accountable. Keep track of your activity on a calendar or a website that offers physical activity tracking. And don't forget to reward yourself when you meet your goals!

dailymile

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MapMyRun

- Try different activities until you find something you enjoy. There is no rule that says because you're an adult you have to be limited to a treadmill or elliptical if those are things you dread. Sign up for a new class at a local gym, or see what exercise videos the local library or your free cable on-demand menu have to offer. Once you find something you like it will no longer seem like a chore!



- Always be thinking about little ways that you can add more activity to your day. Bouts of activity as short as 10 minutes have been shown to offer health benefits. So, get outside and take a brisk walk on your lunch break, or squeeze in a few sit-ups and push-ups while you're watching TV in the evening. Every little bit counts!
- Establish a support network. Find a friend or coworker who has similar goals and be active together as your schedules allow. An exercise buddy can make physical activity more enjoyable and increase your sense of accountability.



- Try to avoid sitting for long stretches during the workday. Set an alarm that reminds you to stand up and be active for a few minutes at least once per hour. Do little things that force you to move – take the stairs instead of the elevator, go talk to a coworker in person instead of sending an email, use the printer in the office down the hall, etc.



- Finally, focus on the “feel-good” benefits of exercise. Try not to worry about losing weight or preventing heart disease (though exercise will benefit these areas as well). Instead, view exercise as a means to feel less stressed, more energetic, and happier. View exercise as time you're taking to do something good for yourself – you deserve it!



*Questions or comments?
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