

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

Make Physical Activity Part of Your Life

Most of us know that there are great benefits of being physically fit. Exercise helps us lose weight, prevent disease, feel happier, and become stronger. Yet many of us are not as fit as we could be, because we have trouble fitting exercise into our busy lives. Yet while it can be hard to make exercise a priority, with just a little extra effort, it can be done!

The best way to become physically fit is to gradually work exercise into your daily routine and be sure that you enjoy the activities in which you participate so that you'll stick to your fitness program and reach your goals. Here are a few ideas to help you get started:

- Find a workout partner – exercise is always more fun with a friend.
- Write down your goals (“lose 15 pounds,” “run a 10K,” etc.) and post them where you can see them frequently.
- Build real rewards into your program for meeting short-term goals (99-cent music downloads). Include bigger rewards for achieving longer term fitness goals (new running shoes).

- Remind yourself often of the short-term AND long-term benefits of exercise (“I’ll have more energy,” “I’ll wear a smaller size,” etc).
- Schedule your exercise time as you would any other appointment you can’t reschedule.
- Start slowly to avoid injuries and burnout.
- Make sure you enjoy *how* you keep fit so that you will stick with it (hiking, skating, softball, ballroom dancing, etc.)
- Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program if you have any medical concerns.

Try these tips and you’ll soon find that you’ve made exercise a habit that you won’t want to break!

For more information on starting and maintaining your physical fitness program, visit www.FOH.hhs.gov/Calendar.