Starting an Exercise Program

MARTIN'S POINT® HEALTH CARE

1. **Decide what activity works best for you.** Exercise doesn't have to involve a gym, expensive equipment, or heavy perspiration. Walking can be the best and the most convenient choice, as long as you have alternatives in bad weather so you don't break the habit once it's established.

2. **Schedule exercise.** Write it on your calendar, put sticky notes on mirrors and screens. Lay out your exercise clothes the night before.

3. **Use a variety of daily reminders.** Set reminders to exercise just like you would an appointment. Set up alarms on your computer calendar or in your phone. Keep sneakers in a place where you will see them frequently, like the front seat of your car or near the front door.

4. **Figure out what motivates you.** Do you exercise better with a friend, going to a class, or on your own?

5. **Invest in a good pair of shoes.** Shoes are the shock absorbers for the whole body. Use these shoes just for exercise so the cushioning lasts longer and replace them as needed.

6. **Start with just 10 minutes each day.** Gradually increase this by 10-minute amounts until you work up to around 150 minutes per week. Five 30-minute sessions are all it takes to notice health benefits. You can break this up into three 10-minute sessions per day and get the same results. Even while watching TV, you can walk around during commercials or go up and down stairs for 10 minutes while waiting for your favorite program to start. If you have a portable phone, try walking around the house while you talk. All these methods will improve your health and count towards your total weekly exercise.

7. **Commit to being consistent.** It takes about three weeks for a new habit to feel natural. Until then, the urge to do something else will be stronger than the desire to exercise. Know that this will pass and you will begin to notice physical benefits. Remember, the hardest part is just getting started.

8. **Make it enjoyable or useful.** Listen to music, books on tape, or talk radio. Garden. Mow the lawn.

9. **See yourself as "an exerciser."** Changing how you see yourself can be hard. Taking the time to exercise says that your health is important.

10. **Write down your reasons.** Are you exercising to lower your cholesterol or your blood pressure, to meet new friends, feel better? Post your reasons where you can see them every day.

11. **Chart your progress each day.** Track it on your calendar or in a notebook. Chart your energy level as well. Over time, you may notice that you have more energy and sleep better on the days you exercise.

12. **Set up a non-food reward system.** Reward yourself when you meet one of your fitness goals, such as sticking with your exercise for a full week or month. Treat yourself to a movie, massage, or a nice hot bath.

Exercising gets easier and more satisfying with each step!

Take the 21-Day Challenge!

Record the activity and how many minutes you completed each day. Then record your energy level on 10-point scale (1=low energy; 10=high energy). Then score how you felt doing the activity on a 10-point scale (1=didn't like it; 10=enjoyed it).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____
Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____
Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____
How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____

Week 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____
Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____
Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____
How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____

Week 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____	Activity: _____
Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____	Minutes: _____
Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____	Energy Level: _____
How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____	How did you feel about doing it: _____

Congratulations! You made it through 21 days, the toughest time period when starting any new habit!

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