

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Make fitness a habit in your life.

We all know exercise is good for us. So, why is it so difficult for some of us to be physically active? Physical activity used to be a daily routine for Arizona's early settlers. It was a necessity for survival. With the introduction of machinery, technological advances and modernization, most work is now no longer physically demanding. As a result, many people are sedentary during their entire work day. Our work days are long and families struggle to balance home and work life. Even when we are home we are not as physically active. We have people cleaning our homes, grooming our yards, tending our pools and preparing our meals. For all our busyness, we have become a society that has managed to avoid physical activity in our daily lives. Time is precious and limited and because of that we must consciously make an effort to be physically active and make fitness a habit.

Get Physical

Doug Thompson, owner of The Body Firm Fitness Studio in Ahwatukee, has some suggestions. When you think of physical activity, Doug suggests thinking of the quality of your life. "Think about how you want to feel when you are in your 70s. The physical activities you commit to today will reflect on the quality of your life in the future." Contrary to popular belief, Doug points out that high intensity workouts are not necessary. "A moderate intensity is all that is necessary to have fitness benefits." Personal trainers have become more popular in recent years. They hold people accountable to their fitness goals. For some people, having an appointment time and a financial commitment helps them to stick with it.

It's been said that it takes three weeks to form a new habit because you need to do something repeatedly. Most people also need to enjoy whatever habit they are forming. "A proficient personal trainer will create a program that you like and at the proper intensity so that you will continue to do it," says Doug. The key to making fitness a part of your life is to choose activities that you enjoy and sneak opportunities for physical movement into your daily routine. Increasing physical activity in your life is easier than you may think and a little can go a long way. Doug recommends these easy tips:

Schedule it into your day.

Look at your weekly schedule and choose 30 minutes, three times during the week that you can give to yourself to be active. Doug suggests, "If you are unable to schedule a 30

minute block, then try 10 minutes, three times during the day."

Exercise according to your personality.

Find an activity you like rather than the latest craze. You don't have to be in a gym to be physically active. If you like dancing, take a dance class. Play a game of tennis. If you enjoy hiking, choose a trail and go. It's your choice; you can do anything you want, just move!

Change it up.

Don't do the same thing all of the time. Choose a few different activities that you enjoy and alternate between them to prevent boredom. "This is especially important if you have a personal trainer," says Doug. "The trainer should not have you do the same routine day after day, but instead be creative in the sessions that are designed just for you."

Work extra activities into your day.

Look for opportunities throughout your day to increase your activity; you'll be surprised at how many there are.

- Park the car farthest from a store you are going to.
- Do your own yard work.
- Take a pet for a walk.
- Take the stairs wherever you go. On your breaks at work, walk the stairs.
- Exercise when you watch TV. Lift some weights, ride a stationary bike or walk on a treadmill.
- Play with your children.
- Vacuum your carpet.
- Walk or ride a bike to a store instead of driving.

Ask family and friends for support.

Receiving encouragement from those around you will help you to stay on track and feel good about your accomplishments.

Fitness travels well.

Choose a hotel that has a pool or an exercise facility. Pack a jump rope, resistance bands, an exercise tape, music and your running or walking shoes. Schedule some of those activities that you enjoy.

Wear a pedometer.

Set a goal to walk 10,000 steps per day. "This is an easy way to track how much you move every day and to feel successful when you've reached your objective," says Doug.



Don't get discouraged if you miss a day.

If you miss a day, don't dwell on it and throw in the towel. Focus on your next scheduled activity session and move forward. Doug says, "We all miss a day once in awhile. The key is to not quit and get back to the routine that you've committed to."

Get an exercise buddy.

This can be someone that you meet at a designated time to be active, whether it is to walk, hike, play racquetball or whatever your heart desires. A companion can be someone to talk to and hold you accountable. You can also use this buddy to swap child care so that you both have the benefit of being active without having to worry about the kids.

Use a personal trainer.

A personal trainer cannot only motivate you and assist you in safely reaching your fitness goals, they can keep your routine from getting boring and continuously challenge you. Doug says, "A competent personal trainer creates a partnership with you. He or she will assess your fitness level and select a program that will interest you according to your personality. Together, you will work toward reaching the goals that you have set for yourself." Before choosing a trainer, make sure that he or she has been educated from an accredited association. Look for credentials from ACE, NCSF, NSCA, NFPT, NASM or ACSM. Doug suggests your program should focus on the three major components of physical fitness: muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and cardiovascular conditioning.

Give the gift of fitness.

This holiday season, give your loved ones opportunities to be active. Gift certificates for dance classes, horseback riding, ice skating or sessions with a personal trainer are great opportunities to enjoy fitness.

Don't feel as though you need to be some kind of super athlete to be active. It's really quite simple. Choose activities that you enjoy. Not only will your mood benefit, but your body will thank you!

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