

Easing Into Exercise

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The Goal is to Develop the Exercise

Habit

If you are reading this ebook, then you understand how important exercise is to your health and well-being. Exercise is truly Medicine whose side effects are positive. When we exercise we have more energy, feel better and help prevent many lifestyle diseases. Exercise also helps lessen the effects of many chronic conditions like arthritis, osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes, and even depression. Exercise and physical activity reduces the risk of Coronary artery disease, hypertension and stroke, diabetes, obesity, back problems, and even some types of cancer.

Exercise is an important factor in both losing and maintaining weight loss. People who exercise tend to live longer and have a better quality of life. Regular exercise extends the years that we can remain active participants in life and reduces the period of sickness that many older persons experience before death. Starting an exercise program can be intimidating, especially if you have not done any significant exercise since your last high school gym class. Infomercials promoting the latest fitness craze often resemble a marine boot camp or feature exercise equipment that could have been designed by the Marquis De Sade. Health club commercials only show young body beautiful people in form fitting spandex. The message we receive is that we have to get in shape before joining a health club. No wonder people have anxiety about beginning an exercise program. The internet is full of get it quick schemes which promise quick weight loss like "Lose 20 pounds in 6 weeks," or "6 days to 6-pack abs." Most of these are just ways to prey on your fears, set unrealistic expectations and sell memberships. The truth is that it takes time, effort and energy to get in shape. Here is the good news. Living a fit lifestyle does not have to be intimidating. As a matter of fact, your chances of success increase if you start slowly and gradually increase the amount of exercise you do over time

The goal is to develop a habit of consistent exercise, not to try out for the Olympics! Did you know that just by getting up off the couch and starting a moderate exercise program, you can decrease your risk of death from all causes by about 29%? You do not need to run marathons or do thousand of pushups to improve your health. Over time, you may find that you enjoy exercise and want to increase your fitness level even

How to Start

more. But even if you just stay at the moderate level of exercise, you will feel better and improve the quality of your life.



In this report I am going to tell you what you should do before starting to exercise and give you ten simple ways to start an exercise program. You will also learn how much exercise you will need to do to see improvement. First, let's see if it is safe for you to start an exercise program. If you plan to start a moderate exercise program and do not have any existing health conditions like known heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes you can start to exercise without seeing a physician. If you plan to start a vigorous exercise program and are a man who is over 40 or a woman who is over 50 years old, see your physician before starting your exercise program. If you have not

been to your physician for awhile and have not had a recent physical, I recommend that you see your physician before starting your exercise program. How do you know whether to see a doctor before starting an exercise program? Every book or video about starting an exercise program recommends that you should see a doctor before starting. Is exercise really that unsafe that everyone needs an exam by a physician to determine if they can exercise without harm? The true answer is “No”. For most people, starting an exercise program is very safe and in fact outweighs the risk of not starting an exercise program. A lifestyle without exercise puts us at increased risk for many chronic conditions like hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. In fact, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine estimate that lack of regular, moderate physical activity is responsible for the loss of as many as 25,000 lives a year. Unless you have experienced a major cardiovascular event like a heart attack, stroke or heart surgery, or have known cardiovascular disease, you do not need to see your physician before starting a moderate physical activity program. The key word here is moderate. This is exactly the type of program that most fitness professionals, including myself, recommend if you are new to exercise or have not exercised in the recent past

There are many good reasons to start with a moderate program of physical activity and progress to more intense exercise as your fitness level increases. A moderate program is easier to follow and will provide the same health benefits of a more intense program. Injury rates are lower with moderate levels of activity and the chances of long term success are better. However, according to a 1995 article by Russell Pate and Stephen Blair in the Journal of the American Medical Association, if you decide to start a vigorous exercise program and meet any of the following criteria, then you should definitely see your physician for a medical evaluation before starting an exercise program.

Think of Your Exercise Program as a

Puzzle

- Use tobacco [□]
 - Have some form of cardiovascular disease
 - Have two or more of the following cardiovascular risk factors
 - High blood pressure
 - High blood cholesterol
 - A family history of heart disease
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - Obesity
- A Male older than 40 years of age
A female older than 50 years of age
Answer "yes" to any of the questions on the Physical Activity Readiness Scale, (PAR-Q).

Think of your exercise program as a puzzle that you put together over time. Each piece is important for the completion on the whole picture. The puzzle is your personal picture of health and wellness. The frame is our foundation for health and fitness and adds structure to our puzzle. By establishing a good frame, we can create a more fit and healthy core of puzzle pieces on our journey to a better you.

Now that you have determined if it is safe to start a moderate exercise program, we will look at ten simple ways to get started.

Starting an exercise program can be as simple as walking to the corner of your street. You can use some or all of the ten tips below to get you started on your fitness program. Just by taking action, you will have improved the quality of your life. You will feel better, have more energy and be on your way to better health. Here are your ten tips on how to ease your way into exercise.



1. Take A Walk

Walking is one of the best and simplest forms of exercise we can do. Walking is simple, does not take any special equipment and we can walk anytime and anyplace. You can start by walking in your neighborhood. You can walk for time or for distance. I recommend that you start to walk for time first. The distance does not matter as much in the beginning of an exercise program. The goal is to move on a consistent basis. Start with a time where you do not feel exhausted when you finish. If you can only walk for a minute or two before you get tired, that's ok. You can take smaller walks several times a day and still get the benefits of an exercise program. Gradually increase the time that you walk. Walk every other day until your conditioning level builds. For basic health benefits, increase the time that you are walking until you can walking for 30 minutes at a brisk pace on most days of the week.



I love to walk and include walking in my regular exercise program. I have several routes in my neighborhood that I walk. The routes range from one to five miles in length. When I want to take a longer walk, I visit one of the local, county or state parks and walk one of the trails available.

2. Workout with a Buddy

Exercise is more enjoyable when we workout with a partner. Find a friend who is also interested in starting an exercise program. Most people need a system of social support to attain and maintain their exercise program, especially when starting a fitness program. You can increase your chance of becoming a lifelong exerciser, by having a support system in place. Even if you have the best intentions to maintain an exercise program, life will interfere at some point and throw you off track. You may become ill or have to take care of a sick child or parent. Work commitments, weather, vacations and holidays may throw your workout schedule off. A good support system will help you restart your program after an unexpected layoff or missed workout.



Support comes in different forms. We each need something different to help us maintain our fitness routine. We may need emotional support, someone to listen to our exercise issues without judgment. We may need someone to praise us for our efforts and when we make progress toward our fitness goals. At times we might need someone who will challenge us when we lapse and to help us achieve higher levels of fitness. People who can give us expert advice and act as role models can also serve as support for us. Look for people who fit your specific needs when you are setting up your support system. Your support system may include a workout partner, a support person at home, health club staff, friends or family. A workout buddy can help you stay accountable to your program. Scheduling your workout with another person can help provide that extra motivation when you are not in the mood to exercise. We are more

likely to show up for an exercise session when someone is depending on us. Exercise is also more enjoyable with a friend. A friend can help you take your mind off exercise.

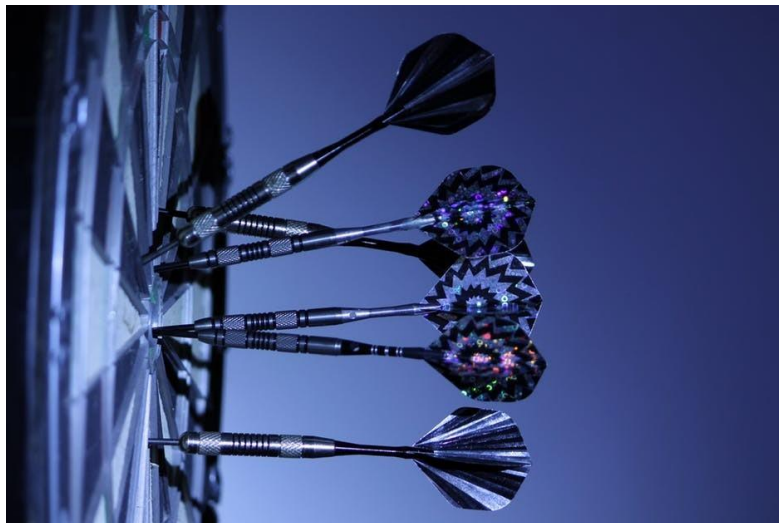
Set a Goal

Exercise can be fun, social and productive at the same time.

Starting a trip without a destination in mind will get you somewhere, but it will probably not be the place you intended to go to. Even if you are in it for the pure sake of the journey, having a roadmap can make the journey more enjoyable and rewarding. Setting a goal gives direction and purpose to our fitness program. Goals should be specific, able to be measured, realistic and time oriented. Goals fall into two categories, long term and short-term goals. Long term goals are the end results that we want to achieve. Some examples of long term goals are to run a 5K race in August. Short term goals support the long-term goal. Short term goals are the steps we take to achieve our long-term goal. Think of short term goals as steps on a ladder. Each step that you take brings you closer to the top of the ladder, your long-term goal. In our example of running a 5K race, the short-term goals might include running three days a week, weight training to improve the strength in your legs and upper body, analyzing your running form, getting eight hours of sleep a night, strengthening your core so your back stays in an upright position when you run, following a planned program of increasing the distance you run, and obtaining a certain volume and intensity of your training program. Remember, your goal must be realistic. If you are only able to run the length of a block, running a 5K race in a month may not be realistic. Shoot for a goal that is achievable like running one mile without walking in 30 days. Planning for obstacles or challenges that you may encounter while trying to reach your goals will increase your chances of success. Use if/then planning to deal with the inevitable challenges that will pop up. For example; If it rains or snows when I am supposed to do my daily run, then I will go to the gym and run on the treadmill or I will run up and down the stairs in my home. Health or Fitness? (What are your goals?) The spectrum of fitness is as wide as the ocean and ranges from basic health to elite sports performance

Set a Goal

The person who walks 30 minutes a day on most days of the week is considered fit, just as Michael Phelps, who trains at high intensity levels for hours each day and who was able to win gold medals and set world records in more swimming events than anyone else in history. The 30minute walker has improved their basic health and decreased their risk of death. Michael Phelps has achieved his performance goal of being the best swimmer in history. Examples of goals: Weight Loss – I will reduce my weight by 10 pounds over the next 5 weeks. Strength – I will be able to squat my bodyweight ten times with good form in the next 30 days. Volume – I will exercise three times a week for 30 minutes for the next 4 weeks. Flexibility – I will be able to perform a squat with my feet flat on the ground and be able to touch the floor with my hands without rounding my back by the end of the month. Mobility – I will be able to perform a standing lunge without assistance in the next three weeks.



4. Write it Down

Keep a journal to monitor your progress. Use an online training log or make your own hand written notes or an excel spreadsheet. Each has advantages. On-line logs are ready made and set up for easy use. The drawback of an online training log is that the setup may not mesh with what you want to track. Many journals are set up so you can only enter three sets per exercise. If your training calls for more sets per exercise, the log may not be setup to accommodate you.

A handmade training journal offers more flexibility but may make comparisons harder. A daily calendar journal bought from an office supply store makes a great journal. Recording your exercises in itself will provide a boost to your training. The act of writing down your sets and reps will bring an increased awareness to how you are training. Online journals are an excellent way to track your workouts and progress.

In your journal record your exercises, sets, reps, and weights. In addition, rest periods, volume, soreness factor, nutrition and supplements may also be recorded.



Convenience, Cleanliness, Customer Service

5. Join a Health Club

Most towns and cities have a wide variety of health clubs where you can accomplish your fitness and health related goals. If you have never belonged to a health club, the experience of joining can be very intimidating. People often have the perception that health clubs are for those that are already in shape. I often hear people say that they want to join a club but want to lose a few pounds or get in shape first. Health club members today come in all shapes, sizes, ages and level of fitness. The Health Club is there to help you with your fitness program. The Health Club market today is more specialized than even ten years ago. Each club caters to a different group of people with different goals and needs. There are clubs for young people, family clubs, 24-hour clubs, clubs for bodybuilders and hard-core weightlifters, clubs for older adults and personal training studios. Health clubs today range from low cost, no frills gyms to high end multipurpose health clubs where you can workout, enjoy a healthy lunch and relax with a spa experience. Choosing a Health club that meets your needs can be as confusing as choosing a stock that will make money.

Cleanliness – A clean club shows that the staff cares about the club and the members who use the club. A dirty gym is a haven for germs that can make you sick. Cleanliness means that not only the locker rooms, walls and floors are clean but the exercise equipment is clean and in working condition. Many health clubs have anti-bacterial wipes available for members to wipe down equipment after each use.

Customer Service – One of my pet peeves is Health Clubs where the staff does not help members. Look for front desk staff that are pleasant and greet members by name. The fitness staff should be walking the exercise area and helping members learn to use the equipment properly and help them with their exercise programs. Look for clubs where

the staff is friendly and interacts with the members. Avoid a club where the fitness staff spends their time leaning against a wall or counter or hang out with each other.

So, how do you find the right health club for you? Here are some tips to help you find the best club for you. Start with the three C's – Convenience, Cleanliness, Customer Service Convenience – Believe it or not, this is probably the most critical factor in determining if you will use a club. Health Club operators understand that most people will only drive 10-15 minutes on a regular basis to use a health club. The further you live or work from a Health Club, the more likely you are to not use the club and eventually quit. Look for a club that is near to where you live or work.

Cleanliness

Customer Service

Cleanliness

Fitness Center Tips

Try before you buy - Ask for a complementary workout – most clubs allow you to experience the club before you join. The best trials allow you to workout several times in a week to see if the club fits. Some clubs offer a free trial, after you complete all the paperwork for membership. A membership may automatically start after the completion of the trial. If this is the case, make sure you cancel the membership before the end of the trial period if you decide not to join the health club. Trial memberships or workouts are for first time users only and should be used only if you are truly interested in joining a club.

Avoid Clubs with high pressure sales staff – The sales process for a health club should be based on your needs as a potential member. Sales staff should at a minimum have

you complete a Par-Q, which is a physical activity readiness questionnaire. The questionnaire is the standard used by health clubs to determine if it is safe for a person to exercise. The staff should also ask you about your goals for exercise. At the minimum clubs will offer orientation programs to the exercise equipment and a free training session for new exercisers. The best clubs will provide a series of assessments and design a program to meet your needs and goals. If the sales staff uses tactics like, “this offer is only good for today”, or offers a special deal just for you, or tries to shame or badger you into a membership, you can bet that the club is more interested in the initial sale and the service level will be non-existent.

Check the qualifications of the staff – Most of the staff at better health clubs will have special certifications. The fitness staff should have a minimum of a certification from a reputable organization like the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Strength and Conditioning Association or The National Academy of Sports Medicine. Fitness staff may also have obtained degrees in exercise science, exercise physiology, athletic training or kinesiology. Some staff may have specialty certifications in group fitness, yoga, pilates, senior fitness, wellness or life coaching. Look for a club that has qualified staff to meet your particular needs

Finding a Good Fitness Center

Safety – How safe is the fitness center? Is the staff certified in CPR? Is there an AED, (Automatic Electronic Defibrillator) available and accessible in the club? Are the staff trained to use the AED? Does the club run drills to make sure the staff can handle emergency situations? Although the risk of a life-threatening event is low, emergency situations do happen and health club staff should be prepared to handle these events. Look for written emergency procedures near phones throughout the Health Club. How crowded is the club? – Use your trial membership during the days and hours that you would be normally using the club. Typically, health clubs are more crowded in the evenings and at the beginning of the week. Weekends may also be busy, especially in family-oriented clubs. January and February are the most crowded months in most clubs due to an influx of new members who have made a New Year’s resolution to get in shape. Does the Club offer programs for new members? – Good health clubs are sincerely interested in the success of their members. More people quit the club during the first six months of a membership than at any other time. Establishing the habit of exercise is harder than you may realize. Health clubs that want to retain their members will offer programs and activities to help new members establish the habit of exercise and experience success in their workouts. Look for a club that cares about you and not just about the sale.

Parking – Does the club have enough parking spaces? Is the parking close to the entrance of the club? Do I have to pay to park? Are there enough handicap spaces available? Parking can be one of those small irritants that can lead to dissatisfaction with your health club. Covered parking lots are greatly appreciated during inclement or cold weather. Make sure that the parking space fits your personal needs. Health Club memberships range from a low of \$10 per month to over \$100 per month. Why is there such a variation? Aren’t all health clubs the same? The answer is a definite “no”. The difference in price is basically due to two factors, amenities and service level

Fitness Center Service Levels

The most basic clubs like Planet Fitness and Snap Fitness offer mostly cardiovascular equipment and some resistance equipment. The service level is minimal and the clubs are often are staffed by one employee. Prices range from \$10 to \$20 dollars per month. The next level of clubs are priced in the \$20-\$40 dollar per month range. These clubs are often big chains like LA Fitness or small “mom and pop” clubs located in strip malls or warehouse type areas. The LA Fitness type clubs offer good equipment and may include other amenities such as a pool or basketball court depending on location. The “mom and pop” clubs are often clubs for the “hard-core” lifter. Some amenities like basic locker rooms and group fitness classes are often available at these clubs. The next level of Health Clubs are larger clubs with a few thousand members are either chains or privately owned. These clubs offer a wide variety of programs and classes as well as extra paid services like personal training. These clubs will often have a pro shop and snack area. Prices range from \$40 to \$60 per month. High end clubs offer the most variety of programs and services and equipment. These clubs will have towels available to their members for use in the locker room and as sweat towels to use while they exercise. High end clubs offer restaurant and spa services and often have one or more pools available for member use. Basketball, squash and racquetball courts are often available. Indoor or outdoor tennis may also be included. These clubs offer high value and service for the fees they charge which will range from about \$80 to well over \$100 per month. Personal training studios and small boutique clubs offer one-to-one personal training and small group personal training and specialized programs like bootcamps, (high intensity interval training), yoga, kettlebell training or Cross t are also available. Many have limited hours and may cost as much as a mid-range or high end fitness center. These studios often achieve the best results with their clients because of the personalized attention to each member.

6. Take a Class

A great way to start an exercise program is to take a class. Today, there are a greater variety of exercise classes available than ever before. You can find traditional aerobic or step classes, mind/body classes like yoga, Tai Chi or Pilates, classes for strength training, and specialty classes like Kettlebell, ballroom dance, Zumba, cycling, martial arts or even pole dancing.

Exercise classes are structured to give you a complete workout in an enjoyable format. Classes are a great way to meet people with the same fitness goals as you. If you decide to take an exercise class, understand that you do not have to keep up with the rest of the group. You may feel like a fish out of water at first. Do the parts of the class that you can. Take a break if you need one.

Introduce yourself to the instructor before the class begins. Let the instructor know that you are new to exercise. Good instructors will be able to teach to beginner, intermediate and advanced exercise levels in the same class.



7. Go to a Park or Playground

Parks and playgrounds offer many fun ways to start an exercise program. You can walk or ride a bike at many of our local county and state parks. Many parks have paved or dirt trails. Dirt trails are often marked with painted marks or “blazes” on trees. Each blazed trail is a different length. Follow the colored blazes on the trees to complete a trail.

Neighborhood playgrounds are great substitutes for health clubs. Did you know that you can get a full body workout while having a lot of fun at the local playground? Playground equipment can be used for pushups, pullups lunges step-ups and even abdominal and core exercises. The playground is a great place for family fun and fitness.



8. Buy or Subscribe to an Online Exercise Video

Exercise videos can be found online, in bookstores, on infomercials on television and even in the local supermarket. The benefit of using an exercise video is that you can watch it anytime you want at home. The drawback of most exercise videos is that the workout is always the same. After a period of time your body adapts to an exercise program and improvement ceases. This works if you are just trying to maintain your fitness level. To improve you need to change the exercise you do. You will want to purchase several DVD's over time or subscribe to a service with many online classes, so you have a variety of exercise routines to follow and continue to make progress. Check the qualifications of the video star. Many celebrities cash in on their star status through fitness videos but do not have a clue about designing a safe and effective exercise program.

Another word of caution, be careful about following Fitness videos on YouTube and other social media platforms. Although there are many reputable online trainers, it may be hard to distinguish someone who knows his or her craft from someone who is giving useless and unsafe information.

9. Hire a Personal Trainer

A good personal trainer will teach you how to exercise properly, motivate you and provide encouragement and hold you accountable with your exercise program. Personal trainers help reduce the time it takes to go from fat to fit by providing safe, efficient exercise routines.

Look for a personal trainer who has a reputable certification, experience and one who fits your personality. Personal trainers can be found at health clubs and personal training studios. Some personal trainers will also provide services in your home.

10. Play a Sport or a Game

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Personal training options include one-on-one training, couples training and group training. One-on-one training provides the greatest level of personalization of your program, but costs more than other options. Although there is less individualization with couples and group training, sessions cost less. Group training has the added benefit of support from the other members of the group.



Sports and games can be a great way to get fit and stay in shape. Soccer, basketball, tennis, and swimming are examples of sports that can provide a lifetime of fitness for both the competitive and recreational athlete. Playing games like Frisbee or tossing a football are great ways to add exercise into your routine.

Well, there it is. You now have ten tips on how to ease into an exercise program. As a special bonus for reading through this whole report, I am going to tell you ten ways to get a good workout at home.



For more free fitness tips and information go to www.Strengthforlife.us

Home Workout Tips

Ten Ways to Have a Good Home Workout

1. Walk the steps inside your home for a cardio workout. Steps will quickly raise your heart rate and will keep the legs strong. If steps are too challenging walk laps around the inside of the house.
2. Turn on the radio and dance. Dancing is fun and an excellent form of aerobic exercise that burns calories.
3. Do callisthenic type exercises like jumping jacks to get your heart rate up and tone your muscles.
4. Use your bodyweight as a resistance training machine. The body is the best weight training tool that we have. Performing a series of pushups, crunches, and squats will give the entire body a workout. Use the wall if regular pushups or squats are too hard or add weights in your hands if you are a more advanced trainee.
5. Use milk jugs or plastic containers as dumbbells. Find items in the house that are as heavy as the dumbbells and weights that you use at the gym. You can do squats, presses, curls or any exercise that you do with a dumbbell.
6. Practice Yoga. Yoga can be performed anywhere and will help strength, flexibility and balance. Yoga also relieves stress.
7. Work on your balance. Try to stand on one leg at a time. If you can do this easily, try to balance with your eyes closed.
8. Stretch. We often leave stretching out of our daily exercise program. Today would be a good day to work on flexibility exercises. Be sure to warm up first.
9. Use the rooms of your house for a cardio/strength circuit. Walk or run from one room to the next in your house. Perform a set of exercises like ten pushups and then immediately walk or run to the next room. Perform ten squats or some other exercise. Continue through the entire house performing a different exercise in each room. This is a fun way for the entire family to exercise together.
10. Clean the attic or the basement. Packing or unpacking boxes, moving furniture or heavy-duty cleaning are activities that count in our daily activity levels. This

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is a good way to exercise and complete a project that we have probably put off for a long time.

Thanks again for reading through this special report. If you would like more free fitness information, go to www.Strengthforlife.us



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