

Exercise module

GOALS: MAKING THEM EVEN EASIER TO ACHIEVE

We hear the bad news all too often: Dropout rates from standard exercise programs reach 50 percent or more by the end of the first six months. The good news? There are things you can do to ensure you're not one of those dropouts.

Perception of time.

If you place exercise low on your priority list, you are more likely to quit. The key is to carve out small pieces of time that fit your schedule.

Social support.

Your biggest fans — friends, family or weight-loss buddies — can cheer you on when you're doing your best, or encourage you when you need that extra push. Ask for their support! Likewise, read the book *Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success* to learn how to have that crucial talk with someone who keeps tempting you with tasty snacks and skipping workouts.

Enjoyment and choice.

People who choose the type of exercise they like do much better in the long run. Doing something enjoyable keeps you coming back for more.

Reasonable exercise intensity.

Remember Aesop's fable of "The Tortoise and the Hare," where the tortoise plodded along to the finish line while the speedy hare burned out before finishing? It's so true: "Slow and steady wins the race."

Self-management skills.

Having the ability to manage your own behavior is another major factor to success. "Stick with it" exercisers develop the organizational skills necessary to track progress and consistency.

Specific goal setting.

Setting a goal to "exercise more" or "do better" is not specific. Instead, try: "I want to walk for 20 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday."

Exercise for the right reason.

Do it for you and not someone else.

Choose the right equipment.

For example, if your hips, knees or ankles hurt from walking, you may not have the right shoes. Get new shoes every six to 12 months and replace them when the middle portion (midsole) develops creases. If you need advice on picking a walking, running or general cross training shoe, consult with a local running shoe store or visit www.RunnersWorld.com or www.RoadRunnerSports.com for advice.

Establish a time and place.

Include when and where you will exercise as part of your weekly planning activity. You may want to experiment with different times of the day for exercise and find a variety of places where you can do your different exercise programs (e.g. parks, malls, fitness rooms and places within your own residence). You might also consider getting a membership at a health club or local recreation center.

Find an exercise buddy.

Knowing that another person is depending on you to show up for a workout makes it much more likely that you'll be there. Also, exercising in a group means that someone there will likely match your pace and types of exercise.

Overcome boredom.

One way to prevent boredom is to engage in a variety of activities. Throughout this program, you will learn a number of different ways to exercise that will help you effectively combat exercise boredom.

Reward yourself and enjoy.

If you want to maintain your new exercise program, you must reward yourself for your efforts! Identify and enjoy non-food rewards when you successfully complete your exercise program. For example, upon completion of two weeks of consistent exercise, treat yourself to a new CD/music download.

When the “Goal-ing” Gets Tough

An important part of goal planning is deciding what to do when you find yourself straying. There are many tools you can use to mentally prepare for a challenge or “psyche” yourself into exercising, even when you’re having an off day. Here are a few:

- When you slip up, don’t give up. It’s OK to make a mistake. That’s why there are erasers on pencils.
- Pull out an old picture where you were more healthy and feeling better.
- Call a friend for a pep talk or better yet, to find a walking partner.
- Just five minutes. Agree to move for just five minutes at a time.
- Change your home screen on your phone to add some motivating messages to yourself.
- Get the following books:
 - ♦ *Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler
 - ♦ *Perfectly Yourself: 9 Lessons for Enduring Happiness* by Matthew Kelly