

## 7 Common Excuses for Avoiding Exercise

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*"I don't have time to exercise." "Exercise is boring."*

Does this sound like you? If you've used these or similar excuses to avoid exercise, you're not alone. Two out of three Americans are not getting enough exercise. Don't let these excuses stop you from exercising.

Here are the top seven barriers to exercise and ways to hurdle over them:

1. **No time.** Spend a week identifying 30-minute time slots that you can set aside for exercise. Then mark your day planner accordingly. Find ways to work in physical activity into your everyday life. Park further from your office, take the stairs instead of the elevator, ride your bike to the grocery store. Other time "obstacles" to hurdle:
  - **Travel for work.** Choose a hotel with a fitness center or pool. Pack a bathing suit and a pair of sneakers.
  - **Family obligations.** Fit in exercise with the kids. Play together. Find time to work out when the kids are at school or staying with a friend.
2. **Lack of support from family or friends.** Tell your family or friends that you want to be more active. Ask them to support your efforts. Get your spouse/significant other or friend to jog or play tennis with you. Find a group, join a gym or a hiking, biking or running club.
3. **No energy.** We all have times when we are more energetic. If you are a morning person, maybe a before-work workout is best. If you feel an energy boost after work, then you may want to hit the gym on your way home. Others find time in the middle of the day.
4. **No will power.** If you're saying this, you may need to write yourself a contract. It may be as simple as writing down a time to exercise in your calendar or date book. You are more likely to do it if you write it down. Choose an activity you enjoy. To stay motivated, choose a reward to work toward and keep you going. Working out with a buddy (tennis partner, walking companion) will also keep it fun and keep you motivated.
5. **Fear of injury.** Talk to your doctor first to get the go-ahead to exercise. If it has been some time since you've exercised regularly, start out slowly so you don't get hurt. Choose a low-impact activity that won't injure your knees or other joints. Choose activity that's appropriate for your age and ability level. Remember to warm up and cool down before and after exercise.
6. **Lack the skill.** If you can walk, you can exercise. In fact, you can build an entire exercise routine around walking. If you always wanted to learn to swim or play tennis, now is the time. You may want to take a class to develop new skills.
7. **Lack of resources.** This barrier may be related to money or location. You don't need to join an expensive gym to exercise. All you need is a pair of sneakers or comfortable walking shoes. Go to a nearby park or make up your own route in your neighborhood. If there's no park nearby or your neighborhood is not pedestrian-friendly, then find a recreation program or health facility at work. And don't let the winter keep you from staying in shape. Take your walking routine to the mall. Work out in the privacy of your home with your favorite aerobics DVD.

You probably know that exercise has many benefits, such as warding off heart disease and diabetes. Exercising 60 to 90 minutes a day can help you to reach a healthy weight. Keeping a routine of 30 to 60 minutes a day helps you stay at a healthy weight. You can even benefit if you break up your exercise program into several 10-minute intervals a day.

So don't let these excuses keep you from cashing in on the fun and the healthy returns. Check with your doctor to find out what a good activity level is for you, and then quit making excuses!