

WELLNESS TIPS

MAKING EXERCISE A REGULAR PART OF YOUR ROUTINE

We often think of the physical benefits of exercise that include weight management, improved muscle strength and stamina, improved diabetic control, reduce risk of cardiovascular disease and some types of cancer. Regular exercise is also associated with improved sleep, increased energy, improved concentration, and memory.

Exercise also has mental health benefits. People who exercise regularly experience increased sense of well-being. Research shows that exercise can treat mild to moderate depression and reduce anxiety and relieve stress.

Current exercise and physical activity recommendations are 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity per week, typically divided into several sessions. Strength training exercise recommendations are two times per week.

Today's Tips suggest strategies to get started and overcome potential barriers to increasing your physical activity or exercise.

GETTING STARTED

- If possible, engage in physical activity when your energy is highest.
- Any activity that gets you moving counts.
- When choosing an exercise or physical activity, do something that you enjoy.
- Set realistic amounts of time. You do not have to meet the recommended guidelines.
- Have clothing/needed equipment available.

OVERCOMING COMMON BARRIERS

- Lack of Time
 - o Identify time wasters, where you can add in physical activity.
 - o Break into shorter time periods, such as 10-minute walks.
 - o Make it a priority, adjusting as your commitments vary.
 - o Plan times for exercise/physical activity and add it to your schedule.
 - o Do a physical activity during TV commercials or while checking social media.
 - o Get off the bus one stop early.
- Boredom
 - o Change up your routine.

- Add variety to your exercises/activities.
 - Take a class or lessons.
 - Play music, read, or watch videos while exercising.
 - Add new goals to challenge yourself.
 - Get a new gadget, piece of equipment, or clothes.
 - Learn more about proper technique or form.
 - Ask someone to join you.
- Inconvenience
 - Exercise at home or outdoors rather than having to travel to a specific location.
 - Participate in activities that do not require a special facility or equipment.
 - Incorporate the activity into your daily routine, such as walking or biking to campus or using the stairs.
 - Have supplies available, such as shoes in your car or backpack in case you have unexpected extra time during a clerkship or need a break while on campus.
- Weather
 - Have some activities that are not dependent on good weather.
 - Dress for the weather.
- Change in schedule or lifestyle requirements.
 - Moderate type of activities or time to exercise as needed.
 - Consider exercise as self-care for stress reduction or to decrease anxiety.
 - Locate inexpensive facilities or resources such as community center gyms or pools, or most convenient locations of UI campus facilities.
- During Travel
 - Walk around the airport terminal rather than sitting while waiting to board.
 - Take walking breaks during road trips.
 - Use the pool or exercise room at hotels or take the stairs.
 - Discover facilities, parks, walking paths that are available at the location you are visiting.

Increasing your physical activity levels or engaging in an exercise routine does not mean you have to suffer. Find activities that you enjoy and develop a plan that works for you. Any change is a move in the right direction and can contribute to feeling better both physically and emotionally.

Healthy Lifestyle. "Fitness." Mayo Clinic. Oct. 11, 2019.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/basics/fitness-basics/hlv-20049447>

MedlinePlus. "Benefits of Exercise." U.S. National Library of Medicine.

<https://medlineplus.gov/benefitsofexercise.html>

Robinson, L., Segal, J., Smith, M. "The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise." HelpGuide. October 2020.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/the-mental-health-benefits-of-exercise.htm>

Check the MSCC Website for past Wellness Tips:

<https://medicine.uiowa.edu/md/student-support/student-counseling/mscc-wellness-programs-and-resources>

Feel free to contact the MSCC to talk with a counselor or schedule an appointment for questions and concerns.

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Stay safe, stay active, and stay well!

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