After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- Recognize the benefits of assessment, goal-setting, planning, and self-monitoring when changing health behavior;
- Identify strategies for effective goal-setting and examples of various types of goals; and
- Identify strategies for overcoming barriers to being physically active.

There may be many reasons people aren’t as active as they’d like to be.

Maybe they struggle to find the time. Maybe they don’t know what to do. Maybe they’re afraid they might hurt themselves. These and other barriers can be overcome.

While sedentary lifestyles are common in American society and many people don’t meet the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, many others do. It is possible. In fact, in a 2013 College Student Health Survey, nearly three-fourths—72.4%—of University of Minnesota Twin Cities students reported levels of activity that met the recommendations for aerobic activity.1

**Resources**

**Getting Started**

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**Why Exercise?**

**Video Transcript**

Christy: I exercise a lot because I like it.

Lauren: I exercise because I know that I’m going to feel better afterwards and less stressed and more accomplished.

Larry: It’s also a social thing. I really like to work out with friends. So, it makes it a lot more fun, and we get to push each other too so.

Molly: For me, exercising is a lot to do with the social values. I’ve really enjoyed going to yoga classes with my friends or going rock climbing with my boyfriend.
Why Exercise? Video Transcript Cont’d…
Rachel: I actually hated exercising before I got to college. And I really thought that exercising meant you had to just be running on a track or doing pushups or something. But when I got to college, I found a Zumba class that I thought was really fun. And so in looking at other classes and finding kind of more different ways to exercise, I really started liking it. So that's now why I exercise.
Andrew: I exercise because a one-hour workout is 4% of your day, and afterwards, you often feel a lot better. You're rejuvenated, focused and you're working on being a better, healthy person.

How do I get started?
Video Transcript
Samantha: I would say start off slow. There's no law that says you can't walk first. So walk, you know, or even walk/run. It's all up to you. Until your body can handle whatever you want to throw at it, just start off at your own pace.
Jacob: I actually started getting into physical activity by actually just starting to work out in my house. I would just—I would start off just doing sit-ups and pushups, and just start off slow.
Samantha: And once I started exercising, I just started feeling better. Even if I didn't see results right away, I just felt—my body felt better, I felt better. So overall it was a really good choice.
Abi: When I started doing physical activity, I actually started bringing clothes to school and like, "Okay, I'm going to get my friend today. We're going to go work out." And for me, it was a motivation. I got a lot of motivation from taking this class and, because of that, I actually found a workout buddy, and then my workout buddy found another workout buddy. So it's like when one person is not there, the other person is there. So we all went together, and we actually had fun, because we would bring our headphones, iPod, and actually listen to some music while we workout. Sometimes it's just, "Oh, are you coming over to the house today?" And when they do come over, take a walk, go on a bike, and it was motivation for me. I was really motivated, and I was like, "Oh, I want to stay fit. I want to be healthy." So we did it.

It’s helpful to know your starting point, and answering the following questions can help.
How active are you currently? How fit are you with regards to each component of fitness? Do you have any health conditions or limitations that may warrant precautions before changing your activity level? See the resources tab below.
for a list of things that merit a conversation with a physician before you get started.

You may also want to consider getting a fitness assessment with a certified personal trainer. Often times, personal trainers and fitness centers offer the opportunity for assessment without the investment of an entire package of training sessions. It’s worth looking into. You might be surprised what’s possible with even a limited budget.

**Resources**

- Considerations Before Increasing Physical Activity
- How Fit Are You?
- 4 Fitness Tests You can Do At Home: Do-It-Yourself Fitness Assessments
- Community Resource
  - Recreation and Wellness Center Fitness Assessment

Once you assess your current activity and fitness level compared to the recommendations for health and fitness, you can set personally relevant and meaningful SMART goals that answer questions about what, why, when, and how much. SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-based.

First, clearly specify what you want to achieve and consider why you want to accomplish that goal. For example, maybe you want to increase your participation in moderate-intensity aerobic exercise to at least 30 minutes five days a week because heart disease runs in your family and you know that improving your cardiorespiratory endurance will help reduce your risk.

Note that this goal is more specific than something like, “I want to be more active.” It specifies what, how much, and how often: at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity five days per week. This is a quantifiable, measurable goal. “I want to be more active” is not a SMART goal because it’s not specific or measurable. It can be helpful to think of the FITT principle—
frequency, intensity, time, and type—when creating a SMART activity goal. What are you going to do, how often are you going to do it, for how long, and at what intensity?

**Resources**

- Best Apps for Setting Goals and Keeping Resolutions
- 15 Fantastic Apps to Track and Manage Your Goals

**In general, meeting the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans is a good goal to shoot for.**

Recall that the guidelines recommend that all healthy adults ages 18-64 engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week, or some combination of the two. The activity should ideally be spread across three to five days and can be accumulated in segments as short as 10 minutes. In addition to aerobic activity, it’s recommended that adults perform resistance training for all major muscle groups on at least two days per week. Finally, the American College of Sports Medicine recommends at least two to three days of full body stretching to increase flexibility.

Remember, these are the public health recommendations for the general population of healthy American adults. Note that this level of activity may not be enough to accomplish certain fitness or sports-related goals. Achieving and maintaining significant weight loss or becoming a competitive athlete, for example, would most likely require more time and energy. But, keep in mind that any activity is better than no activity; there are many benefits to leading a generally active lifestyle and minimizing sedentary behaviors.

**It’s important to make sure that your goal is attainable.**

Be realistic. What’s something that you’ll actually be able to achieve? This doesn’t mean that your goal shouldn’t challenge you. Of course it should. Setting realistic, attainable goals just means that you’re being honest with yourself. It’s practical and smart. It means you’re setting goals that are actually going to fit into your life. After all, you want to feel good and excited about your goals, not defeated by them before you even get started.

Begin with activities that you enjoy or are most likely to enjoy and that are appropriate for your current fitness level. If you haven’t been active in a while,
start slowly and gradually build up the duration of your activity before switching to activities that take more effort. If you try to go from no physical activity at all to working out hard five days a week, it’s probably not likely that you’ll stick with it.

Further, try to set a goal with some flexibility in it as opposed to one that’s really rigid. A goal can be flexible and specific. An example is walking at a brisk pace for 10-30 minutes three to five times per week; this is referred to as a high-low range goal. By contrast, walking 30 minutes four times per week is an example of a single number goal. Research shows that, compared to single number goals, **high-low range goals** are more likely to keep people engaged because they capture both attainability—what’s deemed possible—and challenge—the ultimate aspiration. Consider our example of walking at a brisk pace for 10-30 minutes three to five times per week. Ten minutes may feel relatively attainable, whereas 30 minutes might feel like a challenge. Likewise, three days may feel relatively attainable, whereas five days might seem unlikely at first. Setting goals in this way can increase motivation and feelings of accomplishment, which are both drivers for continued goal-setting and maintenance. Rigid, single number goals, on the other hand, are less likely to keep people engaged because the number selected may be too easy, too hard, or some arbitrary compromise in between. With high-low range goals, the low end can instill a sense of optimism, and the high end can drive people to work harder than they might if they just set a single number goal toward the low end. People who set but don’t meet single number goals because they are too challenging may feel defeated and quit altogether. In contrast, meeting a high-low range goal—whether on the low end, high end, or somewhere in between—leads to a sense of accomplishment, which can motivate people to continue.³

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**Baby Steps**

**Video Transcript**

Dianne Neumark-Sztainer: If you do want to make behavioral changes, if you want to increase your physical activity, if you want to start eating a healthier diet, if you want to start relaxing more, if you want to start sleeping more, whatever it is, what we know from the research is it works best to shoot for gradual change. So don’t try to change everything at once, and don’t try to
Baby Steps

Video Transcript

Dianne Neumark-Sztainer: ... make extreme changes. But think about what would be a reasonable first step for you. If you’re not doing any physical activity, maybe start by walking, you know, 30 minutes, a half-hour a week, walk to class, get a bike, whatever it is. But really shoot for gradual change, because success—small successes often lead to large successes. And don’t be frustrated if it doesn’t go perfectly, that’s fine. Just do the best you can. Don’t feel overwhelmed, because once you make those first few steps, the next few will be easier. And be happy with what you’ve managed to change.

It can be helpful to think about short-term and intermediate goals that will help you work toward your long-term goal.

The long-term goal is the end result you hope to achieve—for example, meeting the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans or maybe completing some sort of event. The intermediate goal is where you plan to be about half way to your long-term goal, and a related short-term goal is one that you focus on initially and hope to accomplish within a week or two.

For example, if you want to work up to doing 30 minutes of continuous moderate-intensity cardio five days per week, and you’re currently not doing any, you might start with a goal of 10 minutes per day. Or, if you’re already meeting the recommendation for aerobic activity but you don’t do any resistance training, your initial goal might be to add 10 minutes of resistance training one to two days each week.

Once you meet the initial goal and it becomes a habit, then you can add more time or intensity until you reach your long-term goal. Remember the concept of overload: the more you increase the frequency, intensity, or duration of your exercise over time, the more fit and healthy you’ll become.

Planning is important.
If you don’t identify what you need to do to achieve your goal, you’ll be less likely to achieve it. If you’re going to take action, it can be helpful to have a plan.
In the context of an activity-related goal, this involves determining when and where you can be active and what equipment you may need.

It can also be helpful to consider any obstacles that might be in the way and how you plan to overcome them.

**Resources**

*Be Active Your Way Guide*

**It doesn’t really matter when you’re physically active, just that you are.**

Examine your schedule and identify some time that can be devoted to working toward your goal. You can be active whenever it works for you! And remember, any amount of physical activity is beneficial, so fitting in even small chunks here and there makes a difference.

Developing some sort of routine with regards to activity—for example, always taking the stairs or biking to campus or exercising around the same time every day—typically helps people stick to their goals, but that might not fit into your current situation. Consider breaks between classes; time that might otherwise slip by could provide an opportunity for some physical activity. Walking, stretching, and resistance training often don’t require a full shower afterwards, so those are good things to fit into smaller amounts of time. You can try to do more activity on days that you have fewer classes or larger breaks between them. Weekends work well for a lot of students.
Here are some more ideas for fitting activity into an already busy schedule.

- Wake up a half hour earlier to go for a walk or jog—what a great way to start the day!
- Stretch and walk between classes to refresh your mind and body.
- Exercise right after your last class of the day; it can be a nice break before studying.
- Practice yoga before bed; it can be a great way to meet fitness goals and relax at the same time.

**Once you identify a specific time for each of your desired activities throughout the week, block it off and guard it.**

Learn to say no to other things during that time. As you do, you’ll be saying yes to an important appointment with yourself. Be accountable to yourself. You deserve it! If this is hard for you, consider asking a friend or roommate to be active with you, which can really help keep you accountable. It can also increase motivation and is a fun, inexpensive way to get together on a regular basis.

If setting aside a specific block of time seems too overwhelming, consider how you might be able to incorporate small things throughout the day. Whatever you decide, try to make physical activity part of your normal routine. Come up with a plan that fits into your life. It will likely be helpful to consider the time management strategies shared in the time management module.

**Resources**

Adding Physical Activity to Your Life

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### How do you fit physical activity into your schedule?

**Video Transcript**

Leo: Actually last semester, I had a gym class, and it was three days a week. I had to go to it, so it definitely helped out. It just was a routine.

Nathaniel: I’m dedicated to it. I squeeze it in where I can. If I have a limited schedule, then I just figure out what part of my body I can blast for—if I only have a half hour, what part of my body I can work for a half an hour. Or if I can just do a little bit of cardio or something like that, then I just squeeze it in somehow.

Michael: Just go home, change, get in the right mind frame so I do do it. It’s just attitude pretty much.
How do you fit physical activity into your schedule? Video Transcript Cont’d…
Paige: Either right when I get up, I’ll try and exercise before I have class or go to work, or I generally do it at like nine o’clock at night, after everything’s been done.
Jacob: I motivate myself to work out by waking up in the morning and saying, “At two o’clock today, I will be at the gym,” and just putting it into my schedule without even a thought. Not like, “Oh, if I have time from two to five.” I say at a certain time I will be there.

Similar to when you’re active, it doesn’t really matter where you’re active, just that you are.
The key is to determine the location that’s going to be the most convenient and fun for you. Consider these questions: Can you accomplish your goals by being active at home or outside? Do you have access to appropriate equipment? If you want to use a gym, can you afford the membership fee if there is one? Does a local gym or community center offer opportunities that interest you? Many campuses offer intramural sport programs and group fitness classes. Participating in these types of things can be great ways to not only reach fitness goals but also meet people.

Community Resource
Campus Recreation and Wellness Center

Where & How to Be Active: Advice from Students Video Transcript
Josh: The rec center. Me and my roommates often go play basketball or workout.
Zanea: Finding different ways to workout. Sometimes it's basketball, just in my driveway, or going to LifeTime Fitness and swimming. Making it fun and different.
Anna: Most colleges will offer group fitness classes where you can be in a group atmosphere. Makes it a little more fun, and there’s just a little bit more accountability to get to the gym and to work hard when you’re there.
Annie: Definitely the rec center. I go there for the fitness classes, and they have every machine you could dream of.
Where & How to Be Active: Advice from Students Video Transcript Cont’d…

Tonya: The fitness room here, they have where you can do all the—like the treadmill and all that stuff. So you could be physically active there.

Nathaniel: You don’t need a place to do it. You can just go outside and jog or walk, or whatever you need to do there.

Ryan: It doesn’t have to be as structured as some people make it out to be. So you don’t have to be intimidated. You don’t have to go to a gym or a rec center to get a great workout. There’s things that you can do outside of a gym or a rec center—for instance, in your dorm room or outside—that will give you just as good of a workout and health benefits.

Kaitlin: You could just take a walk along the river, or around the campus even.

Jessica: There are some good, like running trails in the area.

Liz: There’s so many places that you can run, or you know, just do sit-ups, or something like that, or lunges.

Brittany: Don’t be afraid to join activities. Swing dancing I was kind of apprehensive to join, but it’s super fun, and it’s something that I really love, now that I joined it.

Aby: When it comes to physical activity, do what you enjoy doing. Like go to where you enjoy doing. Like for me, it would be dancing. And when you dance for like, about 30 or 60 minutes a day, you’re getting your physical activity in. You’re getting—you’re working out. You’re getting it in. So you can just do that. Do what you enjoy doing. Do what you love.

Rec Well Tour Video Transcript

Brad: Hi, I'm Brad Hunt with University Recreation and Wellness, and this is the brand new University Recreation and Wellness Center. I'm excited to show it to you today. So let's check it out.

Now, the check-in process to get into the RecWell is a little bit different. These are called biometric hand scanning. You can simply just show up, punch in your student ID, and put your hand underneath here like this, and it'll allow you through the building.

Okay, so right as you walk in through the entrance, you'll see a lot of brand new cardiovascular and strength training equipment. This first level right here is mostly for strength training equipment. So, we have some functional pieces that are
Rec Well Tour Video Transcript Cont’d…
Brad: …used for strength training. We also have some free weights strength training pieces too. So, the first tier above me is treadmills and elliptical machines. Then, as you move up to the next tier, that’s another strength training area. And then that third tiered level is for small group training.

Okay, so now we’re down in the lower level of the Recreation and Wellness Center. And as you can see right here, I’m in the lower level Strength’s Center where there’s a lot of weight lifting equipment, as well as some Olympic platforms. Also on this lower level is the main artery to a lot of different things, one of them being the locker rooms. So, we’ve got men’s and women’s locker rooms. We also have family changing rooms.

Other things you can access from the lower level are the University Aquatic Center, the University Field House, and also behind me, you can see the Outdoor Center. So, for the Outdoor Center, we’ve got rock climbing. We’ve got bouldering. We’ve also got an Outdoor Center—Rental Center where you can rent different things out such as canoes, kayaks, snow shoes, tents, backpacks: all those different types of things are available at the Outdoor Center.

The second floor of the University Recreation and Wellness Center is comprised of 5 multi-purpose rooms, and those multi-purpose rooms are used for a number of different things, but primarily for group fitness classes and some sport club activities, and the second floor also has a little bit of cardio equipment too for workouts.

And we’re here on the third floor of the RecWell, which is comprised of our Ninth of a Mile indoor track. This is something that’s great for us because it just offers the opportunities, especially in the colder months, for people to still get in a cardio workout without having to wait for a treadmill.

So now we’re on the fourth floor of our facility, and to my left, you can see this is a multi-activity court, which is used for a lot of our intramural sports and our sport clubs. And to my right are a couple of more multi-purpose rooms that we have yoga and Pilates class that take place in there.
Rec Well Tour Video Transcript Cont’d…
Brad: …Now, the North building portion of our Recreational and Wellness Center is comprised of a number of different things. We’ve got the handball, racquetball, and squash courts. We also have some more fitness center space there. And we also have the North and the South gymnasiuums. So, the North and South gyms are available for predominantly basketball and volleyball. And this is another thing to notice that whenever we’re not programming for things like intramural sports or sports clubs, we’re always available for open recreational use. So, if you ever wanted to have a pickup game for basketball or volleyball or badminton, things like that, that’s always available to you when we’re not programming.

If the weather is a deterrent to being active outside, then look for places where you can be active indoors.
A gym is not your only option. Consider recreational facilities, arenas or stadiums, indoor parks or zoos, and local schools. Walking at a shopping mall is another option. Or, you might want to get some home workout videos and simple equipment like a resistance band and a jump rope. Look for sales or consider buying used equipment. You can check the Internet or your local library for workout videos. Biking and swimming can be great options when it’s hot but you still want to be outdoors.

Community Resources
- Hennepin County Library
- Ramsey County Library
- URW Sports Field Complex (Dome)
- Indoor Rock climbing

If you’re active outside, think about your personal safety.
Consider going with another person or at least telling someone where you’re going and about how long you’ll be gone. Stay in well-lit and populated areas, and wear some form of identification. If you listen to music, make sure you can still hear what’s going on around you. Follow traffic signals and laws to avoid injury. These things might seem like common sense, but you’d be amazed how many accidents happen because people simply aren’t paying attention to their

Getting Started
surroundings. We’d all like to think, “It won’t happen to me…” but in reality, it’s better to be safe than sorry.

**Resources**
- Road ID wristband
- How to Use Hand Signals on a Bicycle
- Winter Weather: Frequently Asked Questions

**Community Resource**
- Biking Safety on Campus

*When you’re physically active, wear clothes that allow your body to move freely.*

Your range of motion shouldn’t be limited by what you’re wearing.

If you’re active outside during cold winter months, here are some tips for how to dress for the weather:

- Wear layers. Start with a thin layer made of a material that will draw sweat away from your body. Avoid cotton because it stays wet and holds moisture next to the skin. Next wear a fleece layer for insulation. Top it off with something that’s waterproof and breathable. If it’s dark outside, then this layer should be reflective. A great thing about wearing several layers is that you can take them off or put them back on when you need to. Sometimes it can be hard to gauge the temperature from inside, but if you dress in layers, then you’ll be prepared regardless.
- Wear thick, thermal socks or a second pair of the ones you normally wear when you exercise.
- Cover your hands. Wear a thin pair of gloves under a warmer pair of gloves or mittens ideally lined with fleece or wool.
- Cover your ears. Wear a hat or headband. If it’s really cold, then you may also want to wear a scarf or mask over your mouth.
- Protect your skin and eyes by putting sunscreen on your face and lips and wearing sunglasses. The sun’s glare off of snow and ice can be pretty strong.
During the summer months, it’s best to wear light colored clothing that will reflect the sun’s rays. Sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat or visor are also good ideas.

Never wear rubber or plastic clothing, which can trap heat and raise body temperature to dangerous levels.

Refer to the resources tab below for symptoms of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, hypothermia, and frostbite and information about what to do if you or someone else might be experiencing any of them.

**Resources**
- Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-related Illness
- Winter Weather: Frequently Asked Questions
- How to Exercise Safely in Cold Weather

While it does cost money to participate in certain events and activities, being physically active in and of itself doesn’t necessarily require a big financial investment.

For example, you can do things at home or outside to avoid spending money on a gym membership. If you walk or jog outside, you can run up stairs when you come across them to boost the intensity of your workout. Consider biking to and from campus for added activity. Gardening and dancing are other options.

You do need a sturdy pair of athletic shoes and some flexible clothing, but this doesn’t mean that you need to buy the most expensive brands. Shop around and look for sales. Whatever the cost, a good pair of shoes is probably your most important investment when it comes to being active. Your shoes should provide you with adequate support and cushion, and remember that different activities may call for different types of shoes. For example, while a running shoe is ideal for running in a forward direction, it’s not ideal for quick side-to-side movements that are common in sports like tennis or basketball. If you plan to do a lot of different types of activities, then maybe a good cross training shoe is a good option.
You also want to use appropriate equipment and use it correctly. For example, if you’re using exercise bands for resistance training, make sure that the ends are secure and that the band doesn’t have any tears so that the band doesn’t snap back and hit you in the face. It’s also a good idea to wear a helmet if you’re playing a sport or doing some other type of activity that calls for it—for example, snow boarding or biking.

If you want to be active at a gym or elsewhere but feel intimidated or nervous, try to remember that other people are focusing on what they’re doing and not likely paying attention to you and what you’re doing. You never know, they may be just as nervous as you are, and if they are watching you, it may be because they want to learn from what you’re doing. Consider listening to encouraging music, taking a fitness class, or going with a friend; this will help distract you from worrying about what others may or may not be thinking. Remember: time that you’ve chosen to be active is your time, so enjoy it! Clear your mind and focus on what your body is doing.

Community Resource
Group Fitness Classes

Resources
Walking Shoes, Features
Running Shoes, The Perfect Fit

Some people get bored while they’re being active.

A good way to prevent boredom is to participate in a variety of activities that you enjoy.

Perhaps form an intramural or other type of recreational sports team, or join a walking or running club. Try something new—perhaps yoga, kickboxing, or martial arts. Consider training for an event; it will not only recapture your interest and motivation but may also help you take your fitness to the next level. Even if you’re training for a specific type of event, cross training is still important. Variety is good not only for your mind, but your body, too. The same goes for scenery. It might not be the activity per se that’s boring you, but the fact that you’re always doing it in the same place. If you always exercise at the gym, for example, consider heading outdoors for a while. If you already walk or run outside, consider changing your route. If your budget allows, perhaps sign up for yoga or spin classes at a specialty studio once or twice a week. A relatively
inexpensive way to beat boredom is to change your music playlist regularly. Of course, you probably have some favorite tunes that really motivate you, but a little change here and there can make a big difference. If music doesn’t really do the trick for you, consider audio books. Or, forgo music altogether and try to be particularly present and mindful with your body and what it’s doing, or get outside and connect with nature. Regardless of where you are or what you’re doing, consider asking others to join you in your activity. Being active with a friend, classmate, or roommate can be a great way to hang out on a regular basis despite busy schedules. You don’t have to choose between physical activity and your social life; you can combine them!

**Community Resources**

**Group Fitness Classes**

**Resources**

**Local road races and other events**

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**Intramural Sports**

**Video Transcript**

Brad Hunt: Whether it’s indoors or outdoors. We have hockey, broomball, basketball, volleyball. Basically, you name it, we have that type of a sport in an intramural fashion. The good thing about intramural sports is that you don’t have to be competing like you would be in intercollegiate athletics or you would be in a sport club. This is more of just getting your friends together, creating a team, and getting out there. We do all the scheduling for you. You just get your friends together and just have a good time playing intramurals.

Fasil: I like to play intramural sports, because I love soccer. Soccer’s part of my life actually. And I love to play with my friends, any colleagues. The level of competition will be really low. Since everyone’s here to just play, have fun.

Juan: I just like getting outside, and getting some exercise and some good times with friends. Not too serious, just a good time, just enough to enjoy the game. Our team name is “Best Buds Stick Together.”
Social Activity

Video Transcript

Caitlin: When I was a freshman, I got a bike, and a lot of my roommates had bikes too. And so we'd just—we'd always bike around.

Mary: I also play soccer with my friends once a week to make sure that I keep my metabolism up and my energy as well, and it helps a lot.

Caitlin: I think just finding activities that you like to do and you can do with people that incorporate exercise into it is a good way to go.

James: My friend and I, we just motivate each other. Running is another one of those things where we have to run. And one of us won't want to run one day, and the other day it'll switch around, and we'll keep telling each other, and we keep doing it.

Ashley: Friends are a big one for that. It's nice when you have a gym buddy or something, but also just like whenever I see some results happening, or if I notice differences, then it keeps me going and fueled to want to go the next day.

Annie: My roommate has been excellent with motivating me because she's more active than I am. So when I see her go workout, it reminds me that I need to too. But I think getting involved with other people that know that exercise is important to them will also help motivate you as well.

Not only can it be fun and motivating to be active with someone, but simply telling your friends and family about your goals can help you meet them.

Let others know what your goals are and why they're important to you. Ask them to support you and let them know how you want to be supported. For example, maybe you want your mom or friend to ask you about your level of physical activity this past week. Try to think about what would be helpful for you, and then communicate that to your support system. Also consider what wouldn’t be helpful. For example, if your friends pressure you to skip your yoga class to hang out with them instead, that might not help you meet your goal. Offering to go with you or scheduling social activities for alternate times would be much more supportive. Similarly, consider how you might support your friends’ goals. Have a conversation about how you can best support one another.

Once you’ve identified a timeline and plan for working toward your goal, you’ll want to determine a way to monitor your progress.

For example, maybe you will mark the days you exercise on a calendar or record what you did—such as how many sets and repetitions of how much weight you lifted, how many minutes you walked, or how many times you took the stairs instead of an elevator—in a planner or journal or using an online tool or
app. Maybe you'll hang a chart or checklist on your fridge. It really doesn’t matter what you use, but it’s important to have some sort of tracking mechanism so that you can review your progress every week or two. Keep it simple and accessible.

Monitoring will help you determine what is or isn’t working for you and identify changes that you might want to make in your routine. For example, if your goal is to do something physically active for 30 minutes before your first class Monday through Friday but you’re consistently waking up in time to do that only once or twice a week, monitoring your progress might help you realize that you need to go to bed a bit earlier so that you can get up in time for your activity, or that it might work better to find another time during the day—for example, between or after classes.

**Resources**

- [Exercise Logs](#)
- [The SuperTracker Physical Activity Tracker](#)
- [Exercise Progression Tips](#)
- [Recommended Health & Fitness Apps](#)

**Change can be difficult, and it rarely happens overnight or with little effort.**

Try to stay positive. Consider the challenges you face and brainstorm potential solutions. Ask others for ideas or helpful suggestions. Don’t beat yourself up if you struggle a bit. Instead, try to identify your problem areas and move forward from there. If you keep putting one foot in front of the other, you will achieve your goals and greater health, but recognize that it takes time.

Don’t forget to celebrate your success along the way. Reward yourself for your efforts. Meeting goals, even small ones, is an accomplishment. Once in a while, consider rewarding yourself with a new workout shirt or tune to motivate you toward your next goal, or scheduling a massage to tell your body thanks for its efforts.
At the very least, take a few moments at the end of each bout of activity to relax and reflect on how your mind and body feel. Pat yourself on the back for taking care of yourself.

**Community Resources**
- Massage
- Recreation and Wellness Center Hydromassage

Consider physical activity within the context of your life as a whole. Your goals should be realistic for your life. If you’re not a competitive athlete, then maybe it doesn’t make sense for you to work out like one. If your ultimate goal is to achieve a sense of balance and overall wellbeing, which is what we suggest, be cautious of focusing on exercise so much that it prevents you from enjoying other parts of life. As discussed earlier, all of the wellness dimensions are important, and the more they’re balanced the happier and more satisfied you’re likely to be.

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