

Rewarding Strategies That Could

Help You Move More

Get motivated to be more active by finding ways to make exercise fun!

You probably know that exercise usually makes you feel better, but sometimes life—or excuses—can get in the way. You can spend 20 minutes debating about whether it might rain, or focusing on all of the reasons why right now is not a good time to walk—or you could just lace up your shoes and go.

When it becomes easier to talk yourself out of exercise than it does to just get out there, don't give up—give yourself a motivator. Exercise shouldn't feel like punishment, but it never hurts to have goals (and rewards!) in place to help give you that extra push out the door.



Work a reward into your workout.

Maybe you walk—instead of drive—to meet your friends at the coffee shop (bonus: going through the effort of exercising may help you resist the doughnut once you get there!). Perhaps you make a deal with yourself that you can only watch your favorite show while you're on the treadmill or doing other exercises.

Create a prize to keep your eye on.

Remember those star charts that rewarded good behavior when you were a kid? Create one to keep track of your exercise. First define your prize: a night out at the movies—or a night at home to stream the latest blockbuster? Some new music? Then decide how many “stars” (or check marks) you need to get—maybe 12 over the course of a month—to earn your prize. Then, get moving!

You might be exercising without even knowing it.

Walking with your dog is legitimate physical activity. Even vacuuming the house counts for something: it's lifestyle

exercise. When you remember that these everyday chores count toward your get-healthy goal, it's easier to get motivated—and accomplish a few tasks around the house.

Recruit a friend.

Ask a friend who also is trying to get healthier to join you on your walks. Knowing that she's counting on you may make it less likely that you'll skip your planned activity. And consider setting a big goal together. Maybe there's a 5K charity walk you could sign up for? You may be motivated to train, and you'll be helping a worthy cause.

Think of exercise as “me time.”

If you can convince yourself to think of exercising as “me time” and not just another chore you have to check off your list, you might be able to see the act of exercise as a reward in itself. When you're at the gym, on a walk or riding your bike, no one is likely to bother you. Think of it as a break from your normal reality, and it might even start feeling like the best part of your day.

