



Build a Supportive Network

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Staying active after beginning an exercise routine can be a challenge. Frequently reported barriers for maintaining activity include lack of time, waning motivation, and lack of enjoyment. Research has clearly demonstrated that individuals who have a strong support system for exercise are much more likely to remain active than those who have less support. Support for exercise can take many forms. Friends, family, coworkers, exercise groups, and personal trainers are only a few examples of people who can provide support for exercise. Regardless of who makes up your support system, it is important to communicate your desire to be active and express to others how they can help you fulfill this very important goal.

SUPPORT AT WORK

Many people spend a major portion of their days at work. Those businesses that have a built-in exercise program have a major advantage because these facilities generally have staff that can provide advice and encouragement for exercise. If your office does not have such a facility, check with your human resources office to find out if there are discounts offered to employees by local gyms. Alternately, find a coworker who will exercise with you during lunch break. There is real truth in the fact that people exercise more regularly when they have someone to whom they are accountable. You also can discuss with your boss the possibility of setting up a work schedule that allows you to more effectively plan exercise into your routine. Ultimately, if you are healthier, you will be a better employee!

SUPPORT AT HOME

Ironically and unfortunately, home can sometimes be a difficult place to find support for exercise. Finding ways to meet family obligations and maintain personal goals can be a challenge. Time

away from family, even when it is for a good reason, can create feelings of jealousy, envy, and guilt. It is important to communicate to family members the important health benefits of regular exercise and the fact that choosing to exercise is not merely a selfish request on your part. In the best case, you can find ways to exercise together. For example, choose weekend hikes rather than afternoon matinees. Fitness facilities sometimes offer family rates, child care, and activities for different age groups. Taking advantage of these kinds of programs will give everyone in your family a chance to benefit from an active lifestyle.

SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

Friends can be one of the most valuable forms of support for exercise. Whether it is a person who exercises with you or someone who provides supportive encouragement, finding someone who shares your value of regular exercise can be very beneficial for remaining active. One effective way to get support from a friend is to find someone who can exercise with you on a routine basis. Even if this joint workout is only one time a week, that one session may be enough to encourage you to exercise on your own on other days.

OTHER SUPPORT

For some, joining an exercise class is a great way to get regular exercise. Having a scheduled time to workout, investing money in an exercise program, and having supportive people in the group are all reasons that this is a good option. Some people benefit from hiring a personal trainer. Although this expense is prohibitive for some, having one-on-one training can give some individuals the motivation and accountability needed to build a regular exercise routine. A number of less expensive community-based resources exist for people wanting to be active. Examples include senior center exercise programs, running clubs, and adult recreational leagues.

Most people in our lives ultimately want what is best for us. The mental and physical benefits of regular exercise are undeniable, so getting others to support your exercise habit is not an unreasonable request. It may be that others will begin to see you as a role model for exercise and find ways that they also can build exercise into their daily lives.

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