

Journey to Wellness — A free self-guided healthy living program

# Move more: Getting started



Want to feel better, have more energy and even add years to your life? Just move more.

The health benefits of regular physical activity and exercise are hard to ignore. Everyone benefits from exercise, regardless of age, sex or physical ability.

Regular exercise has these benefits:

- Controls weight.
- Combats health conditions and diseases.
- Improves mood.
- Boosts energy.
- Promotes better sleep.
- Puts the spark back into your sex life.
- Adds fun — and social connections — to life.

Getting started with a new exercise routine can be difficult. Many struggle with where to start. When it comes to making

significant, long-lasting change, it is important to spend time preparing, planning and setting a SMART goal. SMART goals help position you for long-term success.

SMART stands for:

- **Specific.** Set a goal that is specific, so you know that you are reaching it.
- **Measurable.** Set a goal that you can measure easily. A goal of doing something “more” isn’t easily measured.
- **Attainable.** Avoid aiming too high or too low.
- **Realistic.** Be sure your goal is realistic. Unrealistic goals will leave you discouraged.
- **Trackable.** Choosing specific, measurable goals means you can track your progress over time. Find a way to track your success.

When starting or increasing your exercise routine, consider how you can incorporate these five elements:

- 1 Aerobic**  
Activities that get your heart pumping.
- 2 Strength**  
Lifting weights or using your body weight to help build or maintain muscle and strengthen bones.
- 3 Flexibility**  
Stretch your body to improve your range of motion.
- 4 Consistency**  
Do physical activities that you enjoy to help you stay motivated and consistent.
- 5 Safety**  
Check with a health care professional when starting a new exercise routine. Start slowly, and gradually increase time and intensity to prevent injury. Get professional help if formal instructions are needed.



Information adapted from [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org) "[Exercise: 7 benefits of regular physical activity](#)," and Mayo Clinic Health System blogs "[Setting SMART goals for success](#)" and "[The 5 elements of fitness](#)."

[mayoclinichealthsystem.org/journey](https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/journey)

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