

## Overcoming barriers to participating in physical activity or exercise

We previously shared information about the difference between exercise and physical activity – both are an important part of being well and there are benefits to each. Summer is known as the active season for many. As seasons change however, we sometimes become less active. Without a routine of exercise and physical activity, we may find it challenging to remain active in the off season. Here are some ideas about what we can do to maintain movement throughout the year!

### Some common barriers to physical activity or exercise are:

- Lack of motivation
- Not enough time
- Dislike of activity in general
- Inconvenience
- Lack of self-confidence in abilities (including safety issues)
- Access to facilities or opportunities

### Strategies to overcome these barriers include:

- Create a community of friends who will support each other and challenge the group to stay committed.
- Substitute physical activities (walking, bowling, swimming, etc.) in place of other activities such as watching TV or going out to dinner.
- Divide activities into smaller pieces if you don't have lots of time – as an example, walk for 15 minutes three or four times a day instead of all at once.
- Seek out opportunities to “move” more like parking the car away from the supermarket entrance or stretching when vacuuming by reaching under and above.
- Find activities that are enjoyable and rewarding and don't forget how good they feel when you're doing them!
- Set goals that are specific, attainable and measureable – watch what gets in the way and ask yourself – what (or who) is most important? Place yourself on the top of the list.
- Focus and vision on what it will be like when you reach your goal – what will it feel like to have more energy, feel less stress or maintain your weight at a healthy level?

Sometimes, we get in our own way, make excuses and make the situation worse! We must remember that once we get started, it becomes easier and routine.

By the way, here's a partial list of **benefits to exercise** in case you're on the fence or want a reminder of how important it is:

- Increased energy – combined with good nutrition, it burns fat, increases muscle and operates at peak efficiency!
- Increased self esteem – when we feel strong and maintain healthy weight, we become more confident and self disciplined in all areas of our life!
- Increased mental focus – exercise helps keep the brain sharp!
- Decreased risk of heart attack, osteoporosis and other illnesses.
- Increased strength and stamina, balance and flexibility!
- Reduced depression
- Decreased stress levels
- More benefits including everything from improved digestion and quality of sleep to better posture and feedback through the nervous system!

We can help you reach your goals with Creating Wellness! Do you know how well you are? The absence of illness or discomfort does not necessarily mean we are healthy and well. A Creating Wellness assessment can help identify the areas of your life that, if improved, will allow you to live life with vitality and energy! Ask us about how you can create more wellness in your life!

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