

Change Guidelines for Stage 3 Exercise Readiness

So you've started to exercise, and maybe you've begun to experience more energy, more restful sleep, clearer thinking, better stamina, improved mood, or better fitting clothes. Greater health benefits can be achieved by exercising regularly and varying your program. Understand the benefits of regular exercise, what behaviors you want to change, set goals, and overcome obstacles, so you can practice the behaviors for this change stage and celebrate your new habits!

Learn the Benefits of Regular Exercise

- Helps control weight, reduce inches, increase energy
- Helps increase metabolism, stamina and endurance
- Reduces low back pain, high blood pressure
- Helps reduce feelings of depression and anxiety
- Helps build, and maintain healthy bones, muscles, joints
- Reduces the risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers

Understand Safety Guidelines for Beginners

To avoid soreness and injury when increasing physical activity, start out slowly and gradually build up to the desired amount to give the body time to adjust. People with chronic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, or obesity, or who are at high risk for these problems should first consult with a doctor before beginning a new program.

- Find out if you need your Dr.'s OK before starting
- Select appropriate exercises and exercise only when feeling well
- Always warm up and cool down
- Understand personal limitations and be alert for symptoms
- Slow down for hills with cardiovascular exercises like (walking, jogging, biking)
- Don't exercise vigorously soon after eating
- Wear proper clothing and shoes

Set SMART Goals

- Specific – Measureable – Attainable – Realistic – Timely

Get Support for Your New Habits

My wellness coach, friend, family member, or partner: _____

Reward Yourself

When reach my goal of _____ I will reward myself by _____

Overcoming Obstacles to Regular Exercise

If one or more of the reasons have kept you from exercising regularly, realize that's normal. It's the consistency of your efforts and permanent behavior changes that will help you reap all the benefits of regular exercise. Remember that it's progress, *not* perfection that's important. Identify what keeps you from exercising regularly, so you can focus on specific solutions, and meet obstacles head on. How do positive changes fit into your values about what is important in life?

What's Next?

When you've been exercising regularly for 3-6 months there are ways to keep reinforcing your new habits. If you've been exercising on your own and need some more to direction to figure out what kind and how much exercise is right for your goals, schedule a fitness evaluation with Gail. Or, find an exercise buddy with similar goals who has already a regular exercise routine. Remember that you will continue reaping the rewards of exercise by making permanent behavior changes and not returning to your old habits. Gail is here to help you to keep moving forward.