

# Finding Time for Fitness

## **How do I find time to exercise?**

Once you've made the decision to start a physical activity program you need to work it into your day. For example, you could start getting up a little earlier in the morning to exercise or walk to work instead of driving. Always use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator. Write physical activity into your daily schedule and don't book conflicting appointments. Try to make exercise a habit, but be flexible. If you miss an opportunity to exercise, try to work activity into your day another way. For example, by taking a walk during your lunch break. Remember; don't allow lack of time to be an excuse for dropping out of a fitness program.

## **What if I can't get motivated?**

Before fitness can become a priority in your life you must make a commitment to it. This could involve setting specific, short-term goals, and rewarding yourself when you achieve them. For example, a goal could be jogging for 10 minutes without stopping. Other motivating strategies could be reading books and magazines on fitness to inspire you or identifying people who are fit as role models. Try to seek out mutual support from friends and family as you start your fitness program. If you are a parent, be an active role model for your children.

## **But, exercising is boring!**

The key to avoiding boredom is to choose activities that you find fun and to vary activities so you don't tire of one. For example, if you jog, walk or bike—don't always use the same route. Enlist the support of a family member or friend as an exercise partner. Activities such as tennis or volleyball make great social occasions, so get a group of friends together and have a great game. Try listening to music to keep you entertained. Remember, exercise should be pleasure, not pain!

## **Where do I start?**

If you haven't exercised regularly in the past year, if you have a family history of high blood pressure or heart disease, are over the age of 45, or if you smoke, have high cholesterol or are obese it is recommended that you see your physician for a complete medical exam before you start exercising. Start off slowly for example walking 10 minutes or just around the block. Then set a goal of exercising 3 days per week for 20 minutes during the first 4 to 8 weeks of your program. Always match your activity to your fitness level and choose an activity that you find enjoyable. Keep a record of your activity to help you monitor your progress. Don't make the mistake of trying to increase the frequency, intensity or duration of activity until you feel you have improved your fitness and established the exercise habit. Wear comfortable, properly fitted shoes and comfortable, loose-fitting clothing that is appropriate for the weather and the activity.

Ask a friend to start exercising with you; it's always easier when you have an "exercise buddy." But, remember have patience and have fun!

