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Enhancing Your Exercise Routine

The first step in improving your health is finding – or making – the time to exercise. However, doing the same workout over and over can get boring. Changing things up can bring amazing results. **According to the American Council on Exercise, here are ways to improve your workout:**

- ◆ Change the mode or intensity of your workout. Get creative and challenge yourself.
- ◆ Hire a personal trainer. A trainer can help keep your workouts fresh and progressing.
- ◆ Eat properly and stay hydrated. Without proper nutrition and fluid intake, there's no way you can have a great workout.
- ◆ Exercise at the right time for your body. Work with your body's natural energy level.
- ◆ Get a workout partner. A partner can inspire you to push yourself a little bit harder when your energy level isn't at its peak.
- ◆ Emphasize breathing. When strength training, take full breaths during each exercise, exhaling on the exertion and inhaling as you release.
- ◆ Listen to music. Music can make a workout more fun and give you that extra burst of energy you need to work hardest.

Source: American Council on Exercise

Set Goals for a Healthy New Year

Because it's a major transitional time, the new year provides a convenient time to take stock of your life. Whether it's dropping weight, starting an exercise routine, or quitting smoking, millions of people resolve to make changes in the new year. However, many of those same people who were so energetic at the first of the year forget about their resolutions and revert back to their old habits in a matter of weeks. How can you set goals and stick with them?



The American Council on Exercise offers the following tips to help you stick to your New Year's resolutions:

- Set resolutions that are realistic and based on your personal history and experiences. If you want to exercise five days a week and you haven't done it in the past, vow to work out twice a week. Make gradual changes.
- Write down both your resolution and your plan. Use clear and concise language. A well laid out plan will help to ensure success.
- Set interim goals. You can't lose 100 pounds or get a doctorate degree overnight. Lose two to three pounds a week, and work toward your degree at a manageable pace.
- Keep track of your progress. Review it once a week.

- Evaluate whether or not you have the skills to attain your goals. If you want to start a strength-training program but have never lifted a weight or been inside a gym, the first step should be to educate yourself on weight training.

- Use positive language. The way you talk to yourself affects your ability to attain your goals. Wipe negative "self talk" – for example, "I can't do it" – out of your vocabulary. Develop a "can-do" attitude.

- Lose the excuses. Don't say: "It's too late for me to go back to school." Instead, affirm: "There's no age limit to getting a degree," or "Once I take the first step and start exercising, it'll be easier for me and become a habit."

- Get support. Reach out to your family, friends, or a group of people who share the same goals and who can encourage you if your resolve weakens.

- Develop coping strategies. Learn how to deal with problems that come up.

- Celebrate your "successes" and rebound from your "lapses." Take credit for success when you achieve a resolution. If you fail, don't blame yourself or give up. Instead, learn from your experience.

For more information, visit the American Council on Exercise at www.acefitness.org. In Canada, visit Health Canada at www.hc-sc.gc.ca.