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May is National Sports and Fitness Month

MAY 01ST 2012 BY AMY ELLINGHOUSE

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Get Moving, Stay Moving!

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month and the goal is simple: Get moving! May is a great time to take a look at your physical activity habits and figure out where you can add in more activity. Most health organizations and doctors agree that 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week, for a total of 150 minutes per week, is what people need to stay healthy. What does moderate intensity mean? Basically any activity that gets your heart rate up for a period of time. You should be able to talk while exercising at this level—but not too easily. Brisk walking, swimming and cycling all count as moderate-intensity activities.

Since it is often difficult to start an exercise program and stick with it long term, following these simple steps can help make exercise a habit that will last a lifetime:

- Write out your current habits
- Set physical activity goals that you think you can do
- Find a workout partner so you can help each other
- Make exercise an important part of your weekly schedule
- Plan your exercises ahead of time
- Be patient with your results

Most people think that sweating in a gym is necessary to reach basic fitness levels. Not so. For those who don't belong to a gym, incorporating simple things like brisk walking in the neighborhood will go a long way to improving health. Weight/resistance training is recommended two days per week but you don't need a gym or lots of fancy equipment. Do things that use your body for the resistance—such as push-ups and sit-ups. Or you can buy some basic weights or exercise bands to use at home.

The health benefits of regular physical activity cannot be emphasized enough. Exercise prevents heart disease and some cancers, lowers your risk for diabetes and improves mood and sleep, among other things.

For more information, visit www.fitness.com.

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