Tips for Getting Started

If you’re thinking about starting an exercise program it can be a little daunting. Here are a few things to remember before you start.

- **Be patient.** It took you awhile to get out of shape. Don’t expect to get back into shape overnight.

- **Set goals.** Evaluate your schedule and interests and set concrete goals. When you see progress, you’ll be more likely to stick with it.

- **But be realistic.** It’s better to set a goal that you can achieve than one that will drive you crazy. Don’t set yourself up for failure.

- **Get a buddy.** An exercise buddy is a great way to be held accountable for your exercise commitment.

- **Make it a routine.** Even the most well intentioned people can find themselves too busy to exercise. Consider making exercise a part of your schedule that is as non-negotiable as any other commitment.

- **Find something you enjoy.** You’re not going to stick with your exercise routine if you hate it. Anything that gets you moving counts as exercise. Think of activities you like to and use those as a starting point. Like to dance? A good place to start is at [Campus Recreation](https://campusrec.unc.edu), between the classes and facilities they offer, they’re bound to have something that interests you.

- **Start slowly.** Doing half or three quarters of your desired workout intensity for the first week and then building up from there can help you avoid injuries and soreness.
Mix it up! There’s no reason why you can’t do 2, 3, or even 5 different activities on varying days of the week. In fact, this is called crosstraining and can help you reduce your risk of overuse injuries.

- **Expect gain, not pain.** Pain is never a good sign. It’s true that you should feel like you’re working, but you shouldn’t push yourself to the point of pain. That’s your body’s way of saying, "Slow down!"

- **Be well rounded.** A good fitness plan incorporates exercises for cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility. These areas work in synergy so by training to improve each of them, you’ll reduce your risk of injury and further enhance your performance in your chosen activities.

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