

**Ready,
Get Fit,
GO!**



Are you **intimidated** by the idea of starting an exercise program?

DON'T BE!

It's easier than you think!

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This exercise guide can help you set goals and stick to them. We've filled the whole book with fun tips and exercise facts to help keep you motivated.

Why should you exercise?

Regular exercise is one of the best things you can do for your body. Below are some of the benefits you can look forward to:

Improved health

- Reduced risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes
- Prevention of bone loss associated with aging, and a lower risk of osteoporosis
- Lower cholesterol levels
- Lower blood pressure and risk of stroke
- Stronger heart and lungs
- Healthier joints
- Increased muscle strength

Improved appearance

- More success at keeping weight off
- Less body fat
- Better muscle tone
- Improved posture

Improved sense of well-being

- Less depression
- More energy and stamina
- Increased productivity
- Better sleep
- Less stress and anxiety
- Better mobility and self-confidence
- Improved immunity to minor illnesses

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Consider all the wonderful things physical activity can do for you. Can you afford not to become more active? It only takes 30 minutes a day.

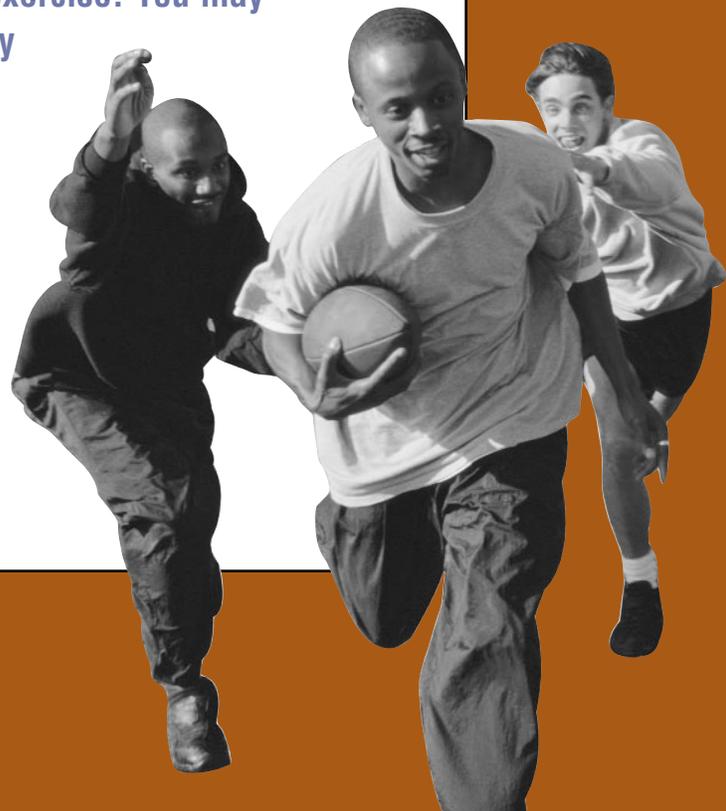
Are you ready to begin a fitness program?

If you've been inactive and would like to begin a fitness program, it's a good idea to make sure your body is up to it. Answering the following questions can help you determine if you're ready.

- Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only engage in physical activity recommended by a physician?
- Do you ever have chest pain brought on by physical activity?
- In the past month, have you had chest pain while at rest?
- Do you ever lose consciousness or fall over due to dizziness?
- Do you have a bone or joint problem that could get worse with certain exercises?
- Has a doctor ever said your blood pressure is too high?
- Do you know of any reason why you should not be physically active?
- Are you over age 69?
- Are you (or might you be) pregnant?

If you answered YES to any question, talk with your doctor BEFORE you start increasing your activity level. A YES answer doesn't mean you won't be able to exercise. You may be able to start slowly, and gradually build up.

If you answered NO to all questions, you can be reasonably sure that it's safe to start exercising. Start slowly and increase the time and effort as your body gets used to exercise. It's always a good idea to talk to your physician before you begin any physical activity program.



Start with a healthy attitude

Set Realistic Goals

- Don't try to be an over-achiever. Becoming more active doesn't happen overnight. Start slowly and add a few minutes of activity each day. Doing too much too soon can cause sore muscles, fatigue, and injury.

Be Patient

- Give your activity program a chance to take hold and don't get discouraged if you don't see immediate results. A lifetime of inactivity can't be undone in just a week!

Track Your Progress

- We've included a fitness chart in the Fit Kit so you can record the progress you've made toward a healthier lifestyle.

Keeping track of your accomplishments can be a great motivator!

Ready? Let's Get Started!

- Fitness experts recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five, and preferably seven, days of the week.
- If you can't fit a 30-minute chunk of time into your day, aim for stretches of at least 10 minutes. As long as the total amount of moderate physical activity adds up to 30 minutes each day, you'll get the same benefits. For example, a 10-minute walk in the morning and afternoon, and a 10-minute bike ride with the kids after dinner would do.

Examples of moderate exercise

While doing daily household activities is beneficial, it is also important to participate in other types of exercise.

- Walking 2 miles in 30 minutes.
- Light jogging for 20 minutes
- Swimming laps for 20 minutes
- Cycling, moderate speed for 30-40 minutes
- Gardening for 30-40 minutes
- Wheeling self in wheelchair for 30-40 minutes
- Pushing a stroller 1½ miles in 30 minutes
- Stairwalking for 15 minutes
- Social dancing for 30 minutes
- Jumping rope for 15 minutes
- Raking leaves for 15 minutes
- Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
- Water aerobics for 30 minutes

Ever considered strength training?

Achieving cardiovascular fitness with aerobic exercises such as walking, swimming or bicycling is an important part of being healthy. And so is increasing your strength – it isn't just for body builders anymore! Before you begin, seek the advice of an exercise specialist to learn what type of program is right for you. Here are just a few of the benefits of participating in a regular strength training program:

- Increases muscular strength
- Improves posture
- Reduces risk of injury
- Helps prevent lower back pain
- Increases metabolism which helps maintain healthy body weight

A regular strength-training program can also enhance quality of life in the elderly. More than anything, as we grow older we want to remain active and independent, and yet we

frequently lose muscle strength and have difficulty just moving around. Strength training can improve quality of life in the following ways:

- Decreases risk of injury by falling
- Helps keeps bones healthy
- Improves balance and mobility
- Enhances ability to lift, reach, stretch

Strength training should be done only 2-3 times a week.

The stretch that's right for you!

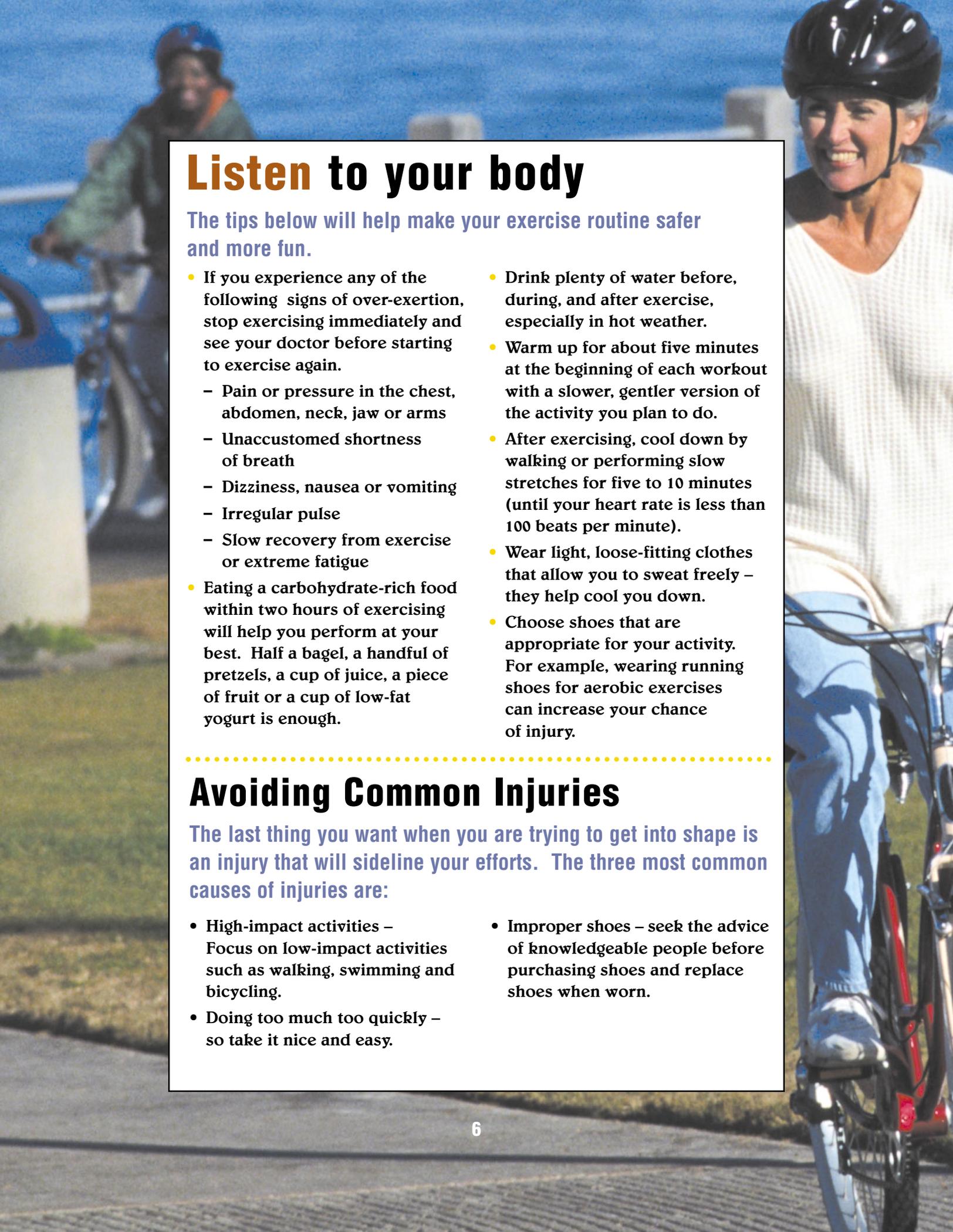
In addition to strength, everyone can benefit from another important component of fitness – flexibility.

Increased flexibility helps:

- Prevent lower back pain
- Increase mobility
- Prepare our bodies for exercising and reduce muscle soreness after exercise.

- Improve posture

A daily stretching routine and stretching out before and after exercise feels great.



Listen to your body

The tips below will help make your exercise routine safer and more fun.

- If you experience any of the following signs of over-exertion, stop exercising immediately and see your doctor before starting to exercise again.
 - Pain or pressure in the chest, abdomen, neck, jaw or arms
 - Unaccustomed shortness of breath
 - Dizziness, nausea or vomiting
 - Irregular pulse
 - Slow recovery from exercise or extreme fatigue
- Eating a carbohydrate-rich food within two hours of exercising will help you perform at your best. Half a bagel, a handful of pretzels, a cup of juice, a piece of fruit or a cup of low-fat yogurt is enough.
- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after exercise, especially in hot weather.
- Warm up for about five minutes at the beginning of each workout with a slower, gentler version of the activity you plan to do.
- After exercising, cool down by walking or performing slow stretches for five to 10 minutes (until your heart rate is less than 100 beats per minute).
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothes that allow you to sweat freely – they help cool you down.
- Choose shoes that are appropriate for your activity. For example, wearing running shoes for aerobic exercises can increase your chance of injury.

Avoiding Common Injuries

The last thing you want when you are trying to get into shape is an injury that will sideline your efforts. The three most common causes of injuries are:

- High-impact activities – Focus on low-impact activities such as walking, swimming and bicycling.
- Doing too much too quickly – so take it nice and easy.
- Improper shoes – seek the advice of knowledgeable people before purchasing shoes and replace shoes when worn.

Staying well hydrated

One of the most important things you can do while exercising is to stay well hydrated. And not surprisingly, water is the best thing to drink.

While sports drinks taste good and are marketed to appeal to the fitness crowd, they are not necessarily better than water. Sports drinks also contain a substantial number of calories that can make exercising for weight loss less effective. Here are some tips:

- Drink about 6-8 ounces of water every 15-20 minutes that you exercise
- Be especially careful during the summer when high heat and humidity can increase the chances of dehydration
- If you choose to use an electrolyte replacement drink, use only the type that contains 6-8% glucose. Drinks that are higher in glucose and soft drinks will slow down the rate at which the body can use the fluids.

Staying motivated

Here's how to keep the fun in exercising!

- Get a partner! Just when you feel like quitting, your partner will show up ready for a walk.
- Choose an activity that you like to do. Your exercise time should be fun.
- Vary the activity – yes, variety is the spice of life with exercise too! Choose several different types of activities so you don't get bored.
- Reward yourself. Think of non-food rewards that you can do for yourself when you have achieved a goal of walking a mile, or after you have walked 5 miles in a week.
- Try walking around the world! Keep track of your miles and plot it on a map – see how far you can go after a few months.





*Michigan Department
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James K. Haveman, Jr., Director

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