

Tips to Get Started!

- HelpGuide.org offers great advice to begin your journey to healthier eating.
- The CDC also provides useful tools and information regarding weight loss.
- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> can aid you in achieving a balanced diet

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Cardio: The Best Friend You Love to Hate

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Benefits of exercise in general are great. These benefits include, but are not limited to, increased longevity, decreased risk for disability, and management of chronic diseases. But there is one word whispered throughout weight rooms and exercise facilities that strikes fear into the hearts of many, if not all, who hear it spoken. To many this word is only a myth. There are a brave few, however, who conquer this demon, and become one with it. What is this word I speak of.....? Cardio! (Insert Alfred Hitchcock movie style scream. You know, like Marion Crane in "Psycho.") The word

drums up visions of sweat and a feeling of exhaustion. It is not a fan favorite in the gym. Cardio is the easiest part of an exercise program to skip, but quite possibly the most important part to maintain overall health.

Listed as one of the five health-related physical fitness components, cardio-

respiratory endurance is defined as "The ability of the circulatory and respiratory system to supply oxygen during sustained physical activity." For healthy adults it is recommended to participate in aerobic exercise at a moderate intensity at least 5 days/week for 30 minutes, or at a vigorous intensity for at least 3 days/week for 20 minutes. Benefits related directly to cardio include decreased blood pressure, decreased heart rate, reduced body fat, and many others. It all adds up to an overall reduction in cardiovascular disease risk fac-



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Barriers to Fitness: Overcoming Common Challenges

Sticking to a regular exercise schedule isn't easy. After all, there are plenty of potential hindrances — time, boredom, injuries, self-confidence. But these issues don't need to stand in your way. Consider practical strategies for overcoming common barriers to fitness.

1. I don't have enough time to exercise
Setting aside time to exercise can be a chal-

lenge. Use a little creativity to get the most out of your time.

- **Squeeze in short walks throughout the day.** If you don't have time for a full workout, don't sweat it. Shorter spurts of exercise, such as 10 minutes of walking spaced throughout the day, offer benefits too.
- **Get up earlier.** If your days are packed and the evening hours are just as hectic, get up 30 minutes earlier twice a week to exercise. Once you've adjusted to early-morning workouts, add an-

other day or two to the routine.

- **Drive less, walk more.** Park in the back row of the parking lot or even a few blocks away and walk to your destination.

Revamp your rituals. Your weekly Saturday matinee with the kids or your best friend could be reborn as your weekly Saturday bike ride, rock-climbing lesson or trip to the pool.

2. I think exercise is boring
It's natural to grow weary of a

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tors, decreased morbidity and mortality, and improvement in overall cardiovascular and respiratory function. Jogging or running, whether outside on the streets, or inside on a treadmill, are popular forms of cardio. Other examples of cardio include biking, the elliptical machine, and swimming. Cardiovascular exercise is also achieved in sports such as soccer or basketball.

The bottom line is, no matter how scary or dreaded cardio is, it is a necessary evil, and one you can learn to enjoy. The benefits cardiovascular exercise provides are critical to maintaining overall health throughout life. Do you want to simply watch your children and grandchildren

play, or be able to play *with* them? As William Wallace said in "Braveheart:" "Every man dies. Not every man really lives." It is one thing to simply be alive. It is another to actually live. Just because we get older does not mean we have to stop being active. YOU can do it! It might not be easy, but it will be worth it. Take control of your body and start moving today. Be someone who took on cardio and came out on top. It starts today, and it starts with you.

ACSM. (2014). *Acsm's guidelines for exercise testing and prescription*. (9th ed.). Baltimore, MD: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.



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repetitive workout day after day, especially when you're going it alone. But exercise doesn't have to be boring.

- **Choose activities you enjoy.** You'll be more likely to stay interested. Remember, anything that gets you moving counts.
- **Vary the routine.** Rotate among several activities — such as walking, swimming and cycling — to keep you on your toes while conditioning different muscle groups.
- **Join forces.** Exercise with friends, relatives, neighbors or co-workers. You'll enjoy the camaraderie and the encouragement of the group.

Explore new options. Learn new skills while getting in a workout. Check out exercise classes or sports leagues at a recreation center or health club.

3. I'm self-conscious about how I look. Don't get down on yourself! Remind yourself what a great favor you're doing for your cardiovascular health, or focus on how much stronger you feel after a workout.

- **Avoid the crowd.** If you're uncomfortable exercising around others, go solo at first. Try an exercise video or an activity-oriented video game. Or consider investing in a

stationary bicycle, treadmill, stair-climbing machine or other piece of home exercise equipment.

Focus on the future. Praise yourself for making a commitment to your health. And remember that as you become fitter and more comfortable exercising, your self-confidence is likely to improve as well.

4. I'm too tired to exercise after work

No energy to exercise? Without exercise, you'll have no energy. It's a vicious cycle. But breaking the cycle with physical activity is one of the best gifts you can give yourself.

- **Try a morning dose of exercise.** Remember the suggestion to get up 30 minutes earlier to exercise? Hop on the treadmill or stationary bicycle while you listen to the radio or watch the morning news. Or step outside for a brisk walk.
- **Make lunchtime count.** Keep a pair of walking shoes at your desk, and take a brisk walk during your lunch break.

Be prepared. Make sure you have comfortable shoes and loose fitting clothes for exercising. Take them with

you to the mall or when you travel.

5. I'm too lazy to exercise

If the mere thought of a morning jog makes you tired, try these thoughts on for size:

- **Set realistic expectations.** If your mental bar is too high, you might give up without even trying. Start with a walk around the block. Don't give up if you feel worn out. Take another walk around the block tomorrow. Keep it up, and eventually you'll no longer feel worn out.
- **Work with your nature, not against it.** Plan physical activity for times of the day when you tend to feel more energetic — or at least not quite so lazy.

Schedule exercise as you would schedule an important appointment. Block off times for physical activity, and make sure your friends and family are aware of your commitment. Ask for their encouragement and support.

For the whole article and more ways of overcoming common challenges please visit:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20045099?pg=1>

Eating Fast Food

Food for thought when fast food's on the menu.

The words “fast food” may conjure images of greasy burgers, salty fries and frosty shakes brimming with fat and sugar. The truth is, fast food doesn't always mean “bad for you,” said Linda Van Horn, professor of preventive medicine at Northwestern University.

“You just have to be selective, both about the choice of restaurant and the choices you make when you get there,” Van Horn said. “Some, but not all, fast food restaurants have grilled chicken, salads, low-fat milk, fruit and even oatmeal choices for breakfast. Figure out which restaurants offer such options and try to frequent those more often. Consumer behavior strongly influences what restaurants choose to serve, so if you want healthier choices, choose them and let it be known.”

Even if you're in good heart health, try to avoid poor food choices, especially the obvious culprits that are deep fried, swimming in cream or butter, showered in salt or glittering with sugar. Even a salad that may seem healthy is just a few dollops of fatty dressing away from being bad for your heart.

“A salad loaded with bacon, salty high-fat dressing and cheeses can have more calories than a hamburger or piece of thin-crust cheese pizza,” Van Horn said.

Diet is an important part of your overall health. A diet high in saturated and

trans fats raises blood cholesterol — a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Too much sodium can raise your blood pressure and too much fat and sugar can lead to obesity, both of which may contribute to heart disease as well.

Make informed food choices.

Knowing what you're eating is truly the best way to understand the health risks, and there are many resources available. The American Heart Association's Heart Check program offers plenty to chew on making it easy to find better options when eating away from home with the Heart-Check mark certification for heart-healthy meals.

Simply look for the Heart-Check mark on the menu—it's similar to the one you may recognize from heart-healthy foods in the grocery store. When you see the Heart-Check mark on the menu, you'll know right away that the meal has been certified to meet our nutritional standards. Currently, not all fast food restaurants include nutrition information. A provision of the Affordable Care Act will require businesses with more than 20 locations to calculate the nutritional content for all food products and post the information on menus and signs, but final rules from the Food and Drug Administration are still pending.

Craving fast food? Not so fast.

If you find yourself driving through for fast food, avoid super-sizing your order to help cut down on fat, salt and sugar.

The grocery store can be a healthy



alternative to fast food, Van Horn said. That's because anything that comes in a box, can or frozen package must have a nutrition label so you can compare products and pick the healthier option. “It's often cheaper and just as easy to run into a grocery store and buy more nutritious food like a freshly made sandwich on whole-grain bread using fresh turkey or chicken and a piece of fruit,” Van Horn said. “Also, many grocery stores sell packaged salads and soups to go, but again, read the label. When it comes to choosing a quick meal, you can think inside or outside the fast food box.”

From:

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/DiningOut/Eating-Fast-Food_UCM_301473_Article.jsp

**Eating
Fast Food:
How to do
it *healthy*.**



Tuscan-Style Grilled Chicken Kebabs

recommended by the American Heart Association

Ingredients

| | |
|--|---|
| 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest | 16 whole button or cremini mushrooms (about 1/2 ounce each), ends trimmed |
| 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice | 1 medium green bell pepper, cut into 16 pieces |
| 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed | 16 cherry tomatoes |
| 2 teaspoons olive oil | Cooking spray |
| 2 medium garlic cloves, minced | 1/2 cup uncooked instant brown rice |
| 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled | 1 cup fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth |
| 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes | 1/4 cup dry-packed sun-dried tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch squares |
| 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, all visible fat discarded, cut into 16 cubes | |

Cooking Instructions

In a medium nonmetallic bowl, stir together the lemon zest, lemon juice, rosemary, oil, garlic, oregano, and red pepper flakes. Add the chicken, stirring to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes. The chicken can marinate for up to 8 hours for even more flavor. Turn several times if marinating for more than 30 minutes.

Soak eight 8-inch wooden skewers for at least 10 minutes in cold water to keep them from charring, or use metal skewers. Preheat the grill on medium high.

Drain the chicken and discard the marinade. Alternately thread the chicken, mushrooms, bell pepper, and tomatoes on the skewers. Lightly spray all sides with cooking spray.

In a medium saucepan, bring the broth and tomatoes to a boil over high heat. Stir in the rice. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand for about 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.

Meanwhile, grill the kebabs for 2 to 3 minutes on each side (8 to 12 minutes total), or until the chicken is no longer pink in the center and the vegetables are tender. Serve with the rice on the side.

Cook's Tip

These grilled chicken-and-vegetable kebabs feature the flavors of sunny Tuscany—lemon, rosemary, garlic, and oregano. Serve them with brown rice studded with sun-dried tomatoes for a rustic and satisfying dinner.



Nutritional Analysis Per Serving

| | | |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Calories Per Serving | 213 | 16 g |
| Total Fat | 2.5 g | Carbohydrates |
| Saturated Fat | 0.5 g | 16 mg |
| Trans Fat | 0.0 g | Fiber |
| Polyunsaturated Fat | 0.5 g | 3 g |
| Monounsaturated Fat | 0.5 g | Sugar |
| Cholesterol | 66 mg | 4 g |
| Sodium | | Protein |
| | | 31 g |
| | | Dietary Exchanges |
| | | 1/2 starch, 1 vegetable, 3 |
| | | very lean meat |
| | Serves: 4; 2 kebabs (3 ounces chicken and 1/2 cup vegetables) and 1/2 cup brown rice per serving | |