



**YOUR
FOUR STEPS
FOR**
*Creating
an Exercise
Routine*

SecurityHealth Plan.

Promises kept, plain and simple.

Introduction

Exercise is like a magic pill. It can help you reach goals you thought were for other people. It can make you leaner, stronger, faster, more resistant to illness and can even make you look and feel younger. We're not saying that exercise can turn back the clock on life, but you might be surprised about what it can do.

You have a right to feel confident about who you are and how you look. Exercise can help you build that confidence.

Exercise isn't just about losing weight or being physically fit. It's part of being healthy for life. Exercise can help you lower your cholesterol without pills and lower your risk of chronic illness. Exercise might be considered the magic pill that lowers your blood pressure, helps control your weight, improves your mood, relieves stress and boosts your energy.

If you've found your way here, you're probably thinking about trying to start an exercise routine. We're glad you've made it this far. We want you to be as healthy as possible, and exercise is one of the best things you can do to maintain or even improve your health.

You might have tried to start an exercise program in the past. But instead of just exercising, let us help you make lifestyle changes in four steps so you can establish an exercise habit for life.. Let us help you enjoy the experience of creating a better, healthier life.

Continue reading for more information on how you can tackle the stages of creating an exercise habit **one step at a time**.

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Step 1

“I *Might* Start Exercising”

Are you thinking about starting an exercise routine? That’s great! You might not yet be ready to start exercising, but think about how a decision to exercise might benefit you.

Your benefits

You’ve heard before that exercise benefits your health. But here’s why it’s so beneficial. Exercise can:

- **Give you more energy.** When you exercise, your blood flow and oxygen levels increase along with your metabolism. This will give you a burst of energy during and after exercise that builds to give you more energy throughout your day.
- **Help you resist stress.** Exercise increases your adrenaline and endorphin levels to improve your mood, regardless of your stress level.
- **Help you resist illness.** Exercise improves white blood-cell circulation to help you resist the bacteria that make you sick.
- **Help you control your weight.** Exercise increases your lean body mass and metabolic rate, and reduces your body fat.
- **Improve your strength.** Exercise builds muscle regardless of your age. Weight-bearing exercise can slow or even prevent osteoporosis. It also helps you recover faster from injuries.
- **Improve your overall health.** Exercise improves your blood sugar balance, lowering your risk for diabetes. Exercise lowers your heart rate, blood pressure and LDL cholesterol, improving your heart and lung health. Exercise also benefits your mind because it strengthens your brain cells against dementia.

**Step
1**

“I Might Start Exercising”

Your reasons are most important

We can tell you all about many of the advantages of exercise. But consider for yourself why you might want to start exercising. In the end, your reasons are likely to be the ones that inspire you the most.

What motivates you to exercise?

What might get in the way of your exercise goals?

What can you plan to do to help you avoid those challenges?

Envision your rewards

Now that you've established your reasons for starting an exercise routine, picture what success will look like for you.

Picture yourself: How will you feel when you look in the mirror after you've started to exercise? Imagine hearing compliments from family and friends. Imagine shopping for new clothes.

Build your energy: You'll be able to achieve more with greater personal satisfaction. You can be more enthusiastic for your daily life because you'll have less stress. You can have more energy for daily activities like playing with your children or grandchildren.

Envision your new lifestyle: You will become stronger and healthier, not because someone else tells you that you should be, but because you want to be stronger and healthier. You will provide a positive example to family and friends. Think about how proud you will be.





“I Might Start Exercising”

More help available through *Partners in Fitness*

We hope that we’ve convinced you to take the next steps toward starting an exercise routine. If you decide that exercise is important to you, we invite you to continue.

If you need further assistance from us, Security Health Plan and several fitness centers have teamed up to offer great gym discounts to help you begin a fitness program. Simply present your Security Health Plan member identification card when registering for the first time.

Discounts vary by facility and are subject to change without notice. For more information on the savings you could receive, discuss our discounts with your desired facility upon registration.

A list of participating facilities is available by calling **1-800-472-2363**, or by going to **www.securityhealth.org**. Click on ***Live Healthier*** at the top of the home page, then scroll to ***Partners in Fitness*** under ***Quick Links***.



Online resources

These websites offer tips, advice and exercise ideas for all levels of exercise enthusiasts. If you need help getting started or just want some new ideas, start with these websites.

Fitness.com – www.fitness.com

American Council on Exercise – www.acefitness.org

Shape Up America – www.shapeup.org

National Institutes of Health – www.nih.gov

**President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition –
www.fitness.gov**





“I *Will* Start Exercising”

Congratulations on deciding that exercise is important to you. You might have tried to start an exercise program in the past with limited success. But have you thought about what small steps you could take now to help you establish an exercise routine and stick to it? Take advice from health care experts and others who have created their own exercise routines. Ease your transition toward a healthier lifestyle with quality physical activity by planning ahead.

So where do you start?

Here are some ideas to keep in mind as you plan your exercise routine:

1. Talk to your doctor. It is important to discuss your goals with your health care provider, especially as your goals relate to your health conditions. You'll especially want to check with your doctor if you have:

- Heart trouble
- Chest pain
- High blood pressure
- Bone or joint problems that could worsen with exercise
- Diabetes, asthma or bronchitis

Regardless of your health risks, you should be able to exercise in some way. But let your doctor tell you whether your goals are appropriate for you and your health.

Step 2

“I Will Start Exercising”

- 2. Determine your goals.** Are you creating a personal exercise routine to improve your fitness, lose weight or to train for a race? Establish your goals now so you have a clear idea of success. Then, adjust your goals as you progress.
- 3. Plan a variety of activities.** Try several exercises in each of these categories:
 - **Aerobic exercise:** Includes brisk walking, biking and swimming
 - **Strength exercise:** Includes push-ups, sit-ups and lifting weights
 - **Flexibility exercise:** Includes stretching and yoga

Using different activities will provide cross-training and cut your chances of injuring or overusing a specific muscle group. It will also help prevent you from getting bored.
- 4. Start slowly.** Be cautious and plan for gradual progress. Don't expect to run five miles on a treadmill right away if you've never used a treadmill. If you develop dizziness, chest pain, chronic soreness or lightheadedness, you might be pushing yourself too hard.
- 5. Write it down.** Plan to exercise by blocking out time in your calendar. Write down what you plan to do and the amount of time you want to spend doing it. A written plan establishes your commitment and holds you accountable.
- 6. Allow down time.** When you start an exercise routine, you're likely to feel stiff or sore at times. Don't let that be an excuse to give up. Instead, plan time between your workouts for your body to rest and recover. You'll probably have less discomfort as your body adjusts to your new exercise habits.



What conditions or concerns do you want to ask your doctor about before you start to exercise?

What would you like to accomplish by starting an exercise routine?

What activities do you hope to pursue? For instance, will you join an exercise class or recreational sports league? Will you ride your bike?

Will you need any equipment like new athletic shoes or sports equipment? Will you buy a gym membership? Will you buy a home gym? Do you plan to invest no money and simply walk every day?

Step 2

“I Will Start Exercising”

Prepare for action

Once you have your plan, follow these three steps to put your plan in motion.

- 1. Decide when you'll start:** Schedule a date soon, preferably within a month, so you remain excited to start exercising.

My start date is: _____

I picked this date because: _____

- 2. Get the support you deserve.** Create a list of people who you will tell that you're starting an exercise regimen. Tell them what you want to do and ask for their support. The people who are most important to you often will be your best sources of support.

People who might provide support: _____



3. Be SMART: Provide yourself with goals that provide direction and motivation by staying SMART.

Specific: Make sure your goal leaves no room for interpretation. Keep it precise and write down an exact guide for what you want to do.

Measurable: Include benchmarks and time periods that will help define success.

Achievable: Make sure your goal is attainable.

Relevant: It's good to have support from family and friends, but your goal should matter to you. If you truly believe it can be accomplished, you will be much more likely to achieve your goal.

Timely: Change requires a commitment. Designate a clear time frame for you to achieve your goal.

Here are some examples of a SMART goal:

"Starting Tuesday, I will ride my bike three times a week for the next month."

"Beginning Saturday, I will plan my weekly exercise routine on the calendar."



Don't forget to provide yourself with small, healthful rewards when you achieve your benchmarks. Celebrate your successes.

What SMART goals can you set for yourself?

Think about what you can achieve over the next week to help you exercise. Once you achieve your goals, continue creating SMART goals until your goals become habit.

Step 2

“I Will Start Exercising”

Remove the excuses ‘I have no time’

A lack of time is a common reason why people don’t exercise or lose interest in exercising. But did you know it is just as beneficial to be physically active for 10 minutes three times a day as it is to be active for 30 minutes once a day? If you have trouble finding time, think about splitting a 30- or 60-minute workout into smaller, more manageable segments to better fit your lifestyle.

While you’re thinking about time, plan now to consider what potential time-related road blocks you might encounter when you start exercising. Remember to make exercise a priority. Schedule exercise like you would schedule a meeting with your boss and don’t just skip it.

“The weather won’t cooperate”

We live in Wisconsin. We know the weather rarely cooperates with our outdoor plans. When we want to jog a few miles outside, there’s a good chance it’s raining, snowing, too windy, too dark, too hot or too cold, and we don’t have time to wait for the weather to change. Consider building indoor exercise opportunities into your routine. Join a health club, walk at a mall or other large building, walk in place while you watch TV, walk up and down your stairs at home or work, sign up for a yoga class or buy a home gym.

“My job leaves me little spare time”

Consider using part of your lunch hour or even a coffee break to go for a short walk. Your body naturally begins slowing down around the middle of the day. You’ll be more energetic and productive when you make time to exercise during the day. If you travel for work, stay at hotels that have fitness centers or swimming pools.

**It’s just as
beneficial to be
physically active
for 10 minutes
three times a day
as it is to be active
for 30 minutes
once a day.**



"I want to spend more time with my family"

Include your family in your exercise routine whenever you can. Go for walks and bike rides together. When you take family vacations, consider what physical activities you can include. If you go camping, take hikes together. If you go to the beach or stay at a hotel, go swimming together.

What other time road blocks can you anticipate for your exercise routine? How can you adjust your daily routine to allow time for exercise?

Step 2

“I Will Start Exercising”

You're one step closer

You are about to give yourself more energy and a healthier lifestyle by starting an exercise routine that suits you. We look forward to helping you take your next steps.



Remember, if you need further assistance from us, Security Health Plan and several fitness centers have teamed up to offer great gym discounts to help you begin a fitness program. Simply present your Security Health Plan member identification card when registering for the first time.

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Step 3

“I’m Exercising”

You’ve started to achieve a healthier lifestyle and you’ve begun to exercise. Be proud! You’ll improve your confidence and energy with every personal benchmark you reach. As you continue, keep using this guide as a helpful tool. Keep it where you can find it. Remember to maintain helpful relationships with your doctor, family and friends along the way, and follow the plans you’ve set for yourself.

As you strive to make your exercise routine a permanent part of your life, keep these points in mind:

It’s hard to break old habits. Practice your new healthful habits to make them routine. It will take time to replace your old habits.

Find a friend. You might find it easier to stick with an exercise routine when you have support from at least one friend or family member. Consider asking that person to work out with you on a regular basis. Talk with them about how they can support you with your exercise efforts.

My support person is _____

Don’t worry about setbacks. If you don’t meet your goals for one day or you don’t exercise for a day or two, you haven’t failed. Remember to focus on your long-term goals. Make note of any mistakes, learn from them and move on.

More news is good news. Keep your mind on track by reading websites, magazines, books and more that feature professionals who can help you. Learn all you can about exercise, healthful routines and changing old habits.

Step 3

"I'm Exercising"

Track your progress

You planned your exercise routine by writing it down. Now, keep track of your progress by writing it down. You'll find that it provides you with accountability and inspires you to continue working toward your goals. Make your **exercise log** exactly what you need it to be, but here are some ideas of what you can include:

- **Date and time.**
- **Location.** Are you at home, at the gym or outdoors?
- **Type of workout.** Are you running on a treadmill? Lifting weights? Attending an aerobics class?
- **Focus.** Did you have a specific goal for yourself? Were you working on a specific muscle group? Were you intending to improve on what you had done the last time you attempted the same exercise?
- **How you felt before the workout.** Were you excited to work out or did you have to force yourself to go to the gym? How was your energy level? Were you in an especially good or bad mood?
- **How you felt after the workout.** Did your mood or energy level change from what it was before the workout?
- **Goals for your next workout.** Do you want to try a different exercise? Do you want to increase your reps or the amount of weight you lift while strength training? Do you want to repeat the same workout?





Mix it up

Even if you come up with the most satisfying exercise routine for yourself, chances are you'll get bored with it if you do the same thing every day. If you get stuck in an exercise rut, here are some tips to finding a way out of the rut.

- Take a nature hike
- Exercise at different times of the day
- Change your walking or bicycling route
- Buy new workout clothes or shoes
- Listen to different music when you work out
- Jump rope
- Join a recreational sports league
- Play backyard sports with your kids such as basketball, volleyball and tether ball
- Use your stairs at home for an aerobic workout
- Participate in a martial arts class
- Take your dog for a jog
- Enter a fun run or bike-a-thon
- Teach yourself in-line skating, roller skating or ice skating

List things you can change in your fitness routine to keep it fun.

Step 3

"I'm Exercising"

Exercise requires a healthful diet

Just as people who target weight loss are more successful with exercise, people who want to exercise will be more successful when they establish healthful diets. You will fuel your body for better workouts if your diet includes the right combination of proteins, carbs and nutrients, and limited fats and cholesterol. Here are some guidelines for what to eat with each meal:

Breakfast: Avoid traditional feasts of bacon, eggs, sausages and pancakes soaked in syrup. Instead, choose a lower-calorie breakfast that will fuel your exercises and your day. Choose whole grains, low-fat proteins, low-fat dairy products and fruit. Try foods such as whole-grain bagels, low-fat yogurt, cereal and fruit.

Lunch: If you pack a brown bag lunch, use whole-grain bread and low-fat meats such as turkey and chicken with low-fat dressings instead of mayonnaise in your sandwiches. Even if you eat out with coworkers at a fast-food restaurant, you can find healthful options that won't betray your healthful habits. Choose salads

with low-calorie dressing and sandwiches that feature grilled chicken instead of greasy hamburgers.

Dinner: Choose lean meats and other protein-rich foods such as fish, chicken and legumes, and feel free to load up on vegetables. Some

healthful options could be salmon with brown rice, broccoli and asparagus, or grilled chicken with green beans and a salad. Avoid calorie-dense options such as french fries, loaded mashed potatoes and full-fat salad dressings.



Snacks: Between-meal snacks might seem taboo when you start an exercise routine, but certain options can help you fuel your workout without countering the calories you burn. Try fruits such as pineapples, oranges, blueberries and kiwis. Yogurt provides a healthful dairy option, and whole-grain oats—like those in oatmeal—provide soluble fiber that can help lower your cholesterol. Other good options include low-fat granola bars and whole-grain cereal with skim milk.

Reward yourself

Starting an exercise routine is a big deal that calls for you to reward yourself for your hard work. Rewards don't have to cost much. They can even be free. Just choose a reward that doesn't undo what you've accomplished. Treat yourself to a new pair of walking shoes, a healthful-foods cooking class or a subscription to a fitness magazine. Take a moment to figure out how you can reward yourself.

Months of exercising at least 4 days a week. Reward:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

You're one step closer again

The longer you stick with your exercise routine, the greater your chance of making it a long-term habit. And you've already come quite far. Think about how your health and quality of life already have changed for the better. We now encourage you to take the long-term steps that will enforce your healthier habits for life.



“I Will Make Exercise a Lifelong Habit”

Your progress in achieving a healthier life is significant. You no doubt feel healthier, more energetic and confident now that you’re taking positive steps. These changes make you a positive example for others trying to exercise on a regular basis, and your new habits will have long-term benefits for your quality of life. Take this opportunity to make your more healthful habits permanent.

Stay focused

Congratulations on developing a workout habit. Make sure your habit will last. Here are some ideas to help your exercise routine remain a lifelong habit.

Create a ritual. Think of your favorite exercise plan. Do it at the same time of day and in the same way every time you exercise for at least a month. Go through with it until you instinctively reach for your workout clothes or athletic shoes every day before you leave the house. Make exercise a habit.

Concentrate on what you are doing. Go to the gym to get fit. Ride a bike on the trail to have a good time. Go jogging to enjoy the fresh air. Lift weights to achieve your own goals. Don’t worry about trying to impress anyone, match someone else’s achievements or reach someone else’s goals. Work out for your own reasons and satisfy yourself.

Reward yourself for showing up. Even if you have goals to lose weight or run a certain distance, don’t forget to reward yourself just for getting out there. Congratulate yourself for your efforts.

Keep going

If you don't meet your goals for one day or you miss a workout, you haven't failed. Don't feel guilty. Focus on your long-term goals. Make note of any setbacks, learn from them and move on.

- ***Did you sleep in and miss your morning workout?*** No problem. Just don't make a habit of skipping your morning workout unless you are making it up at a different time.
- ***Did working late cause you to skip going to the gym one night?*** That will happen once in a while. It's no cause for concern unless you don't go to the gym for about a week.
- ***Are you too sore to work out today?*** You will be once in a while. However, a light workout will increase blood flow to help your body recover more quickly.



Step 4

“I Will Make Exercise a *Lifelong Habit*”

Reflect on your progress

Consider keeping a **journal** of your experiences to remind yourself of how far you've come. Write about how you've benefitted from exercising. Start by tracking your daily exercise. Make notes about how you feel, your challenges and the benefits you've noticed over time. What have you learned about exercising? How do you feel about exercising on a regular basis? What things help you stay positive and motivated to exercise?

When you need a reminder of why you started an exercise routine and motivation to continue with your healthier habits, read your journal. Consider answering questions like these in your journal.

- *What made you decide to establish an exercise routine?*
- *How have you been doing since you started exercising?*
- *What support or praise have you received from family and friends in your exercise efforts? What have they said or done that's been helpful?*
- *What changes do you see in your body?*
- *What advice would you give to someone who wants to start an exercise routine?*
- *What has been the best part of starting an exercise routine for you?*



Revisit your goals

Remember the SMART goals you established in Step 2: **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant** and **Timely**. The goals you established in getting this far helped you make exercise a habit. But many who make exercise a habit are unsure of what to do after they achieve success. Shift your goals from starting your routine toward maintaining your exercise habits.

You might no longer feel that going to the gym to use a cardio machine provides the same reward it did when you started your exercise routine. Find new activities for exercise. Continue learning about exercise programs and strategies through the Internet, books and magazines. Here are some examples of goals you can try:

“I will expand my morning walks from twice a week to three times a week beginning at 6 a.m. Tuesday.”

“While I’m at the gym, I will try at least one new weight machine or aerobic workout per week starting Monday.”

What new goals would you like to accomplish? Write a few SMART goals for yourself, and keep doing them until they become healthful habits.

SecurityHealth PlanSM

Promises kept, plain and simple.

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