Creating Your Fitness Plan

Setting and Reaching Your Fitness Goals

Do you think you could use a little more physical activity in your life? Before you make changes, think about your goals. You may just want to feel better and think more clearly. Maybe you want to build your cardiovascular endurance. Perhaps you want to improve your skill in a chosen sport. Setting personal fitness goals can help you focus and stick with your plan. When you reach a goal, you'll feel great about getting there!

Where to begin? Start by asking your school's coach or physical education teacher to help you. He or she can measure your fitness level and suggest ways to improve it. Together, you can set realistic fitness goals. You should also speak with a medical professional. Let him or her know that you want to begin a fitness program. Ask whether it's safe for you to get started.

Try to work out for an hour each day. Spend about 30 minutes doing moderate activities. Take a speedy walk, mow the lawn, or play some fairly active sports. On most days, do 30 more minutes of harder activities. Choose aerobic exercises or very active sports. Include strength and flexibility exercises up to six times a week. The most important thing is for you to pick an activity you enjoy. Remember that fitness is a lifetime endeavor.
Think about your favorite physical activities. Do they require any special equipment? Exercise does not have to be expensive. Many community park districts run fitness centers. You can use their machines or take classes at a low cost. When and where will you exercise? If you would like to be in a group, you might sign up for volleyball or an aerobics class. If you would rather exercise alone, you might try jogging or bicycling. It makes sense to schedule activities you enjoy. That way, you will be more likely to actually do them.

**Making Time for Fitness**

List the activities you already do. Include gym classes and school sports. Also include any daily activity that gets you moving, like walking to and from school. Now list the activities you would like to add. Decide where they might fit into your schedule. Create a weekly plan that includes all your activities. Keep a chart or calendar to remind you of your schedule. Use a log to track how often you work out, what exercises you do, and how long each session lasts.

After two weeks or so, rethink your schedule. How is it working? Is it realistic? If you find yourself skipping activities, reschedule them for a different day or time. Be willing to make changes. Remember that your goals and needs may change as your fitness abilities improve. You may want to try a different activity. If you vary your program, you keep yourself from getting bored. Don’t forget to have fun!

**Academic Vocabulary**

*vary* (VEHR ee) (verb) to give variety to, to be different, to show or undergo a change. I vary the exercises I do each week.

**reading Check**

List What should be included in a fitness log?

**Working Out Safely**

Getting hurt can take the fun out of any activity. You’ll want to take steps to protect yourself and reduce your risk of injury before you begin a workout. Wear the right clothes. For most workouts, loose-fitting clothes are probably best. Make sure that running or walking shoes support your feet and don’t give you blisters. If you’re outside after dark, exercise with a parent, guardian, or trusted adult. Wear light colors and reflective gear so that drivers can see you.
Health Skills Activity

Goal Setting

Planning for Fitness
Tiffany doesn’t get much physical activity. She spends most of her free time playing computer games or reading. Yesterday, Tiffany told her friend Aleesha that she wouldn’t be able to go to the local park for a picnic with their friends this weekend. Her parents were too busy to drive her, and she knew she would be too tired to walk or bike all the way. Tiffany wants to plan a physical-activity program so she will have more energy to do fun things. However, she doesn’t know where to begin.

What Would You Do?
Help Tiffany come up with strategies for reaching a personal health goal of improving her fitness level. Use the five goal-setting steps.

**Step 1** Set a specific goal and write it down.
**Step 2** List the steps to reach your goal.
**Step 3** Get help and support from others.
**Step 4** Evaluate your progress by setting checkpoints.
**Step 5** Reward yourself after you have reached your goal.

During cold weather, dress in several thin layers of clothing. As you warm up during exercise, you can peel off layers as needed. In hot weather, wear clothing that allows air to circulate and drink plenty of water. You might also need to occasionally drink specialty sports drinks that can help replace electrolytes you lose through sweating during longer workouts in hot weather. Cut your workout time if you get too hot. Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 15, and wear a hat and sunglasses.

For many activities, playing it safe means wearing protective equipment. Another way to play it safe is to work out with a friend. If you are running or jogging, stick to a path with a soft, even surface if you can. A dirt path is better than hard concrete. It will be easier on your muscles and joints. Be careful when working out at night or in an out-of-the-way place. Never go alone. If you plan to use an exercise machine such as a stair climber or treadmill, be sure you know how to use it. Ask a trained person to help you.

**Reading Check** Describe How should you dress for working out in hot weather?
**Keys to a Good Workout**

A workout is an exercise program that focuses on high-energy activity. It might include aerobic activities, moves to build strength or muscle endurance, or all of them combined. If your main activity is running, go biking or swimming, too. If your main activity is swimming, play volleyball or take a dance class.

**Warm Up and Cool Down**

Warm up your muscles before you begin a workout so they will be less likely to tear or get strained. A **warm-up** involves gentle exercises that get heart muscles ready for moderate-to-vigorous activity.

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**FIGURE 3.10**

**WARMING UP AND COOLING DOWN**

Warming up and cooling down are important parts of a safe workout.

*What else can help ensure a safe workout?*

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**Warm Up**

- As you warm up, more blood flows to your muscles. They become more flexible. Your heart rate increases gradually and safely.
- Perform easy aerobic exercises.
- After you warm up, do a few easy stretches.
- Your warm-up should take about 10 minutes.

**Light Stretches**

- Light stretching after a warm-up helps loosen you up. Stretch only to the point where you feel a gentle pull.
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
- To prevent injury, do not bounce or jerk.

**Cool Down**

- Cooling down brings your heart rate back down. It lowers body temperature and keeps your muscles flexible.
- Continue your workout movements, but at a slower pace.
- Cool down for about 10 minutes.
- Stretch again for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Afterward, drink plenty of water.
When your workout is finished, take time to cool down. The cooldown involves gentle exercises that let the body adjust to ending a workout. It allows your heartbeat, breathing, and blood pressure to return to normal. After the cooldown, stretch again to stay flexible. Drink water before, during, and after your workout. Figure 3.10 shows you how to warm up and cool down.

Get Fit with F.I.T.T.

To be effective, a workout should follow the F.I.T.T. formula. F.I.T.T. stands for Frequency, Intensity, Time, and Type of activity. Keep these standards in mind as you plan your fitness program.

Frequency

Frequency refers to the number of days you work out each week. Frequency depends on your fitness goals. It also depends on the type of activity you plan to do, your schedule, and your current level of fitness. Are you just getting started in a fitness program? Then plan to work out three days a week. As your fitness level improves, increase the frequency of your workouts.

Intensity

Intensity refers to how much energy you use when you work out. How hard are you working? Begin slowly and increase the intensity a little at a time. If you work too hard too soon, you will tire quickly. You’re also more likely to get injured. If you’re able to talk while working out, you’re probably working at the right level. If you are out of breath and can’t talk, slow down.

Reading Check Define What is intensity?

Time

Slowly increase how much time you spend at each workout session. If you’re just starting out, aim for 20 minutes. Then gradually increase your workout time.

Keep in mind that you don’t have to do your workout in one long session. If you’re short on time, you can do some activity for 10 to 15 minutes at a time, two or three times throughout the day. Time spent working out adds up and still gives you beneficial results.

Type

What exercise is right for you? To answer this, think about the benefits that you want to gain. You will get the best benefits if you mix aerobic and anaerobic exercise. Spend more than half of your workout time doing aerobic activities. You could jog or bike. Finish up with anaerobic activities and stretching. The type of activities you choose should match your goals, schedule, and interests.
FIGURE 3.11

Calculate Your Target Heart Rate Range

If you know your target heart rate range, you can adjust your workout for the best results. Why is it important to know your target heart rate range?

Step 1
Subtract your age from 220. The resulting number is your maximum heart rate—an estimate of how fast your heart is capable of beating.

\[
\frac{220}{-12} = \frac{208}{208}
\]

Step 2
Multiply your maximum heart rate by 0.6 to find the low end of your target heart rate range. When you first begin an exercise plan, you should aim for this heart rate.

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\frac{208 \times 0.6}{124.8}
\]

Step 3
Multiply your maximum heart rate by 0.8 to find the high end of your target heart rate range. As you become more fit, you can work up to this level. Do not exceed this heart rate while exercising.

Checking Your Heart Rate

You can monitor the intensity of your workout by checking your heart rate before, during, and after your workout. Before you begin your workout, take your resting heart rate. This is the number of times your heart beats per minute when you are relaxing. To check your heart rate, take your pulse for 10 seconds. Multiply this number by 6 to get your pulse rate for one minute. (To take your pulse, place the first two fingers of one hand on the inside of the other wrist. You can also place them on either side of your neck. Don't use your thumb, which has its own pulse.)

After you have worked out for a while, take your target heart rate. Your target heart rate is the number of heartbeats per minute that you should aim for during moderate-to-vigorous aerobic activity to help your circulatory system the most. Figure 3.11 above explains how to calculate the range of your target heart rate. After you complete your workout, take your recovery heart rate. This measures how quickly your heart rate returns to normal right after you stop exercising. The higher your fitness level, the faster your heart rate drops.

Visit glencoe.com and complete the Interactive Study Guide for Lesson 4.

Reading Check: Explain How is a pulse taken?

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Tracking Your Progress

Are you happy with your fitness program? Is it giving you the results you want? After you've followed your weekly schedule for a while, check your fitness log. Compare early entries with later ones. Consider what you've done so far and what you still want to accomplish. Do you need to make some adjustments? Are you getting closer to your goal?

If you've been following your program for six to eight weeks, you should see some results. Your cardiovascular endurance may have increased, and you may feel stronger and more flexible. If you feel you haven't made much progress, think about why. Have you been keeping to your schedule? Did you set your goal too high? Maybe you need more time than you thought. If you're not sure what to do next, talk to your school's coach or physical education teacher.

Reading Check Describe What things will checking your fitness log tell you?

Lesson 4 Review

After You Read

Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.

What I Learned

1. **Vocabulary** Define warm-up and cool down.

2. **Describe** Why is it a good idea to see a health care provider before beginning a fitness program?

3. **Restate** How should you dress for working out in cold weather?

4. **Explain** Name and briefly describe each element of the F.I.T.T. formula.

5. **Identify** What are the keys to a good workout?

Thinking Critically

6. **Apply** Keiko is 12 years old and has begun an aerobics class. She wants to find out what her target heart rate range should be. What would you tell her to do?

7. **Justify** Why is it important to be flexible when planning a workout schedule?

Applying Health Skills

8. **Analyzing Influences** What is your favorite physical activity and why? Did friends or family spark your interest in this activity? Was it something you saw on television or in a magazine? Did social customs play a part? Explain your answer.

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