

5 TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH INTUITIVE EXERCISE

1

CHOOSE MOVEMENT YOU ENJOY

If you find yourself dreading your workout, it's a sign that you're probably not engaging in forms of movement that makes you or your body happy. Try to figure out what brings you the most joy and what feels the best for your body. If you can't think of any types of movement that you like doing, then it's time for some exploration and trial and error. Try out group fitness classes offered by Rec Services, check out follow along videos on YouTube, or get outside and try hiking, biking, walking, jogging, or – in the winter – cross-country skiing or snowshoeing.

2

FOCUS ON HOW IT FEELS

Focus on how the movement feels rather than tallying steps, miles or calories on a Fitbit. Instead of just gritting your teeth through a workout, explore how you feel during the activity and throughout the day afterwards. When we notice positive feelings from an activity, we are more likely to want to continue doing it. If you feel depleted and exhausted, take that as feedback from your body that it needs more rest, fuel or restorative movement.

3

UNCOUPLE EXERCISE FROM WEIGHTLOSS

By making weight loss or burning calories the focus of your exercise, you're less likely to be able to do it consistently. Or become obsessed with food. This is because when weight loss inevitably doesn't happen, slows or rebounds, we lose motivation. Researchers have proposed that it's time we decouple exercise from weight loss because this minimizes its' more important health benefits. If you lose weight as a result of exercising, that's cool. But movement has massive benefits for health separate from weight loss. By placing the focus on these, we are more likely to stick with this health-promoting habit.

4

DON'T DISCOUNT THE BENEFITS OF REST DAYS

Exercise, especially when vigorous, can be stressful to the body. The stress hormone, cortisol, is catabolic, meaning it can cause the break down of muscle instead of the growth. Over training can actually impair performance and strength in the long run. If you check in with yourself and decide a rest day is best, unapologetically give yourself permission to chill! Your performance and strength can actually improve in the long run when you balance work with rest.

5

SCHEDULE MOVEMENT, BUT REMAIN FLEXIBLE

This can be helpful if your days are jam-packed and making time for movement is a struggle. There is no need for a rigid structure. However, many of us lead busy lives and sometimes it's necessary to carve out time for things we want to do. Ask yourself, "when can I consistently make time to move my body?". Figure out when and where, and schedule it in as a commitment to be honored, like any other meeting or appointment. Keeping in mind that sometime we'll need to reschedule, and that's okay!

Looking for more support? Schedule a fitness consultation with Student Wellness by visiting: studentwellness.uiowa.edu/fitness