



6 Shape-Up Secrets for Fitness-Phobes

Even the biggest couch potatoes can learn to love exercise.

Reviewed by QualityHealth's Medical Advisory Board

For many of us, the word "workout" conjures images of profuse sweat, intense pain, and utter confusion. The good news: You don't have to be a natural exercise enthusiast to get in shape. Even the biggest couch potatoes can learn to love exercise.

Just follow these six simple tips....

- **Make Time for Exercise:** Even if you have the best intentions, your fitness regimen could wind up taking a backseat to other commitments unless you schedule your workouts in advance. Be sure to set aside enough time so that you can comfortably exercise, shower, and travel.

If that doesn't work, write the word "exercise" in big, bold letters on your calendar as a reminder.

- **Imagine the Possibilities:** Sure, you may be a couch potato now, but that doesn't mean you can't make dramatic changes to enhance your looks and your health. Instead of thinking of yourself as sedentary, imagine yourself as an active, physically fit person.

What you envision should motivate you to put down the remote control, get off the couch, and hit the gym.

- **Get Real:** Ideally, we'd all love to transform our bodies from flabby to super-toned overnight. But is that realistic? Of course not. Like most things in life, the road to fitness requires hard work, persistence, and patience.

So instead of setting your sights on becoming muscle-bound in two weeks, make a more realistic pledge to reduce your underarm flab within six months' time.

- **Go Slow:** Once you've finally decided to shape up, it can be tempting to hit the gym fanatically. But don't let your newfound enthusiasm get the better of you. Instead, start slowly and gradually build up to more challenging exercises.

Remember, slow and steady really does win the race.

- **Step It Up:** When it comes to fitness, convenience isn't always a good thing. For example, if you drive to work, it's best to park farther away from your office so you have to walk. Along the same lines, try to take the stairs, rather than an elevator or escalator, whenever possible.

A few more steps may not seem like a lot, but over time, they can add up to increased fitness and better health.

- **Buddy Up:** Friends who exercise at the same pace can keep each other motivated. And remember, you and your friend don't have to limit your activities to the gym: Lots of daily activities, such as gardening and raking leaves, have fitness benefits, too.

So ask your friends to partner up--who knows, maybe you have a buddy who wants to start getting fit, too.

Copyright © 2009 QualityHealth.com. All rights reserved.



Visit us at www.commonhealth.virginia.gov