

Tiger Fitness Tips – Personal Barriers

"If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere." –Anonymous. This quote applies to all of us in one way or another. There are barriers that keep us from being, or becoming, regularly physically active. Understanding common barriers to physical activity and creating strategies to overcome them may help you continue making physical activity part of your daily life. In fact, the 10 most common reasons adults cite for not adopting more physically active lifestyles are listed below. (Sallis and Hovell, 1990; Sallis et al., 1992)

Here is a Top Ten List of Personal Barriers you may need to overcome:

1. Do not have enough time to exercise.
2. Find it inconvenient to exercise.
3. Lack self-motivation.
4. Do not find exercise enjoyable.
5. Find exercise boring.
6. Lack confidence in their ability to be physically active (low self-efficacy).
7. Fear being injured or have been injured recently.
8. Lack self-management skills, such as the ability to set personal goals, monitor progress, or reward progress toward such goals.
9. Lack encouragement, support, or companionship from family and friends.
10. Do not have parks, sidewalks, bicycle trails, or safe and pleasant walking paths convenient to their homes or offices.

Once you've identified which barriers affect you the most, look at the table below for suggestions on how to overcome them.

Top Thirty List of Suggestions for Overcoming Physical Activity Barriers:

1. **Lack of time:** Identify available time slots. Monitor your daily activities for one week. Identify at least three 30-minute time slots you could use for physical activity.
2. Add physical activity to your daily routine. For example, walk or ride your bike to work or shopping, organize school activities around physical activity, walk the dog, exercise while you watch TV, park farther away from your destination, etc.
3. Make time for physical activity. For example, walk, jog, or swim during your lunch hour, or take fitness breaks instead of coffee breaks.
4. Select activities requiring minimal time, such as walking, jogging, or stair climbing. Social influence Explain your interest in physical activity to friends and family. Ask them to support your efforts.
5. Invite friends and family members to exercise with you. Plan social activities involving exercise.
6. Develop new friendships with physically active people. Join a group, such as the Tiger Fitness Center or a hiking club.
7. **Lack of energy:** Schedule physical activity for times in the day or week when you feel energetic.
8. Convince yourself that if you give it a chance, physical activity will increase your energy level; then, try it.
9. **Lack of motivation:** Plan ahead. Make physical activity a regular part of your daily or weekly schedule and write it on your calendar.
10. Invite a friend to exercise with you on a regular basis and write it on both your calendars.
11. Join an exercise group or class.
12. **Fear of injury:** Learn how to warm up and cool down to prevent injury.
13. Learn how to exercise appropriately considering your age, fitness level, skill level, and health status.
14. Choose activities involving minimum risk.

15. **Lack of skill:** Select activities requiring no new skills, such as walking, climbing stairs, or jogging.
16. Exercise with friends who are at the same skill level as you are, find a friend who is willing to teach you some new skills or Take a class to develop new skills.
17. **Lack of resources:** Select activities that require minimal facilities or equipment, such as walking, jogging, jumping rope, or calisthenics.
18. Identify inexpensive, convenient resources available in your community (community education programs, park and recreation programs, worksite programs, etc.).
19. **Weather conditions:** Develop a set of regular activities that are always available regardless of weather (indoor cycling, aerobic dance, indoor swimming, calisthenics, stair climbing, rope skipping, mall walking, dancing, gymnasium games, etc.) Look on outdoor activities that depend on weather conditions (cross-country skiing, outdoor swimming, outdoor tennis, etc.) as "bonuses"-extra activities possible when weather and circumstances permit.
20. Travel put a jump rope in your suitcase and jump rope or Walk the halls and climb the stairs in hotels.
21. Stay in places with swimming pools or exercise facilities.
22. Visit the local shopping mall and walk for half an hour or more.
23. Bring a small tape recorder and your favorite aerobic exercise tape.
24. **Family obligations:** Trade babysitting time with a friend, neighbor, or family member who also has small children.
25. Exercise with the kids-go for a walk together, play tag or other running games, get an aerobic dance or exercise tape for kids (there are several on the market) and exercise together. You can spend time together and still get your exercise. Hire a babysitter and look at the cost as a worthwhile investment in your physical and mental health.
26. Jump rope does calisthenics, ride a stationary bicycle, or use other home gymnasium equipment while the kids are busy playing or sleeping.
27. Try to exercise when the kids are not around (e.g., during school hours or their nap time).
28. Encourage exercise facilities to provide child care services.
29. **Retirement years:** Look upon your retirement as an opportunity to become more active instead of less. Spend more time gardening, walking the dog, and playing with your grandchildren. Children with short legs and grandparents with slower gaits are often great walking partners.
30. Learn a new skill you've always been interested in, such as ballroom dancing, square dancing, or swimming.

Now that you have the time, make regular physical activity a part of every day. Go for a walk every morning or every evening before dinner. Exercise on an indoor bike and ride every day while reading a favorite book or magazine.

Reference: Content in the "Personal Barriers" section was taken from Promoting Physical Activity: A Guide for Community Action (USDHHS, 1999).