



Building Endurance

In the beginning of a new fitness program, people are excited about attaining their health goals that they pile on the miles, add on the weights, and increase the intensity. This can quickly lead to burnout or injury, and those two things can derail even the most committed person.

Remember: Endurance activities should not make you breathe so hard that you cannot talk, cause dizziness or chest pain.

It is important to gradually build up your endurance. It's okay to start with five minutes of endurance activities.

Starting out at a lower level of effort and working your way up gradually is especially important if you have been inactive for a long time.

Work your way up to a moderate-to-vigorous level that increases your breathing and heart rate. It should feel challenging, but not so hard that you can not carry on a conversation with someone.

Once you reach your goal, you can divide your exercise into sessions of no less than 10 minutes at a time, if you want to, as long as they add up to a total of at least 30 minutes of endurance exercise on most or all days of the week. More often is better, and every day is best.

Do a little light activity before and after your endurance exercise session, to warm up and cool down (for example: marching in place).

Be sure to drink fluids when you are doing any activity that makes you sweat. The rule-of-thumb is that by the time you notice you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

When you are ready to progress, first build up the amount of time you spend doing endurance activities, then build the difficulty level of your activities. For example, begin by walking longer distances then incorporate hills or walking more briskly to your routine. Over time, gradually increase the time you spend on endurance activities to 30 minutes each day.