

# Encourage exercise in others

Sticking to an exercise routine can be hard. But sometimes getting support from another person can help you get started. If you've been able to work out regularly, you can help a loved one do the same. Be a positive force in their life by supporting them, not forcing them. Try these strategies that can encourage them without pressure.



**Make it doable.** Don't suggest signing up for difficult classes or workouts right away. A walk in the evening or doing push-ups while watching TV can be less overwhelming.



**Try something new.** A new walking route, different stretches or a fun strength program may help them get motivated. Get away from the same old routine that may not have worked in the past.



**Let them pick.** See if they are interested in any local exercise classes or programs — and go with them.



**Plan a meet-up time.** Many people find exercising right after work is helpful. This may be easier than trying to go back out after you've come home to relax. Some people are able to stick to a lunchtime walk if they work in the same place.



**Be consistent.** Try to make your exercise routine a regular part of your week. For instance, two times each week is a doable but consistent way to start.



**Be an early riser.** If the person lives with you, see if you both can get up 30 minutes earlier for a walk first thing in the morning.



**Ditch the car when you can.** If the store or coffee shop is close by, you can walk or bike there together.



**See things from their point of view.** It's hard to get started with exercise. Try to understand how challenging it can be. Ask them how you can best support them.

## A positive mindset

When it comes to exercise, the mind is as important as the body. When starting a new healthy habit or helping someone else, remember to:

**Celebrate small efforts.** Be happy about seeing an improvement — no matter how small — in strength or fitness level.

**Don't let setbacks take over.** If you miss a week or even two, get back to it. Tell the person you're not giving up, and help them try again.

*Remember that every little bit of exercise is a step in the right direction!*

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services