

Lesson 3 *The Biggest Loser*

Reaching Your Activity Goal

One of the questions for lesson one, Get Moving, was “What is your greatest challenge in meeting” your walking goal. Almost everyone’s response related to motivation and finding time to exercise. This week’s lesson talks about ways to overcome those challenges.

All of us struggle to make positive changes in our lives—whether it’s to quit smoking, keep our desk neat, or increase activity. It is quite a challenge to change our behavior. Researchers have found that when people try to change any behavior, they go through similar steps. Here are the five stages you’ll pass through as you increase your activity and improve your nutrition:

1. Precontemplation: You don’t see a need for change and don’t have any desire to do it.
2. Contemplation: You’ve become interested in making the change, but don’t know where to begin.
3. Preparation: You are taking concrete steps to get ready to change.
4. Action: This is an exciting stage—the first six months of change. You’re making progress, enjoying the exercise, seeing benefits.
5. Maintenance: The change has become a part of your life—a habit you wouldn’t think of breaking, just like brushing your teeth.

Some people move smoothly through these five stages. Others struggle more; their hopes don’t readily translate into action. Everyone who signed up for *The Biggest Loser* has made it to step four, action.

When you find yourself stuck, start by tapping your motivation. Writing down all the reasons you want to exercise will help move you to action. Doctor Gerald Kenyon listed six things that motivate people to exercise:

- Health and fitness benefits
- Improvements in appearance
- Social opportunities
- Stress reduction and emotional well-being
- Enjoyment of the activity itself
- Thrill seeking.

Which of these motivate you? On a recent trip, I met a 70 year old man who had spent the previous two weeks skiing, and in the last year had bicycled across Borneo. I’d like to be able to do those things at 70! That motivates me to exercise now so that I am able to be active as I age. And, who wouldn’t want their clothes to fit better? Or, to fit into those smaller clothes still in their closet? Make a list of the things that motivate you, and review your list often.

How do you find time to exercise? Make physical activity a priority. Reviewing your list of motivators will help you make it a priority. Put it on your calendar or daily ‘to do’ list. Several of you said you would get up earlier to take a walk, or use your lunch hour.

Make family time physically active. Plan a weekend hike through a park, family softball game or an evening walk around the block. The exercise is as good for your kids as it is for you! I treasure the discussions I have with my son as we walk his dog.

Build physical activity into your routine activities. America on the Move has a list of 100 ways to add 2000 steps. Here are my favorites.

- Walk around the block once when you go to get your mail.

- Drive (or walk!) to the high school and go around the track. Four laps equal approximately 2000 steps.
- Pace around your house or office while talking on the phone.
- Park in the far reaches of the parking lot.
- Walk to work if you live close enough.
- Buy a walking video so you can get in your steps on rainy days.
- March in place while watching your favorite TV show.
- Play a round of golf but pass on the cart.
- Encourage your co-workers to join you on walks during breaks.
- Create a step competition with fellow employees or friends – see who can get the most steps in a day.
- Designate 10 minutes of your lunch break for a quick walk.

For the entire list of “100 Ways to Add 2000 Steps, go to www.americaonthemove.org or call 1-800-807-0077.

Be active in ten minute spurts. Remember that you don't have to exercise for 30 minutes at a time. It's just as good to exercise three times a day for 10 minutes each. This may be easier to fit into your schedule.

It is all about convenience; if you try, you can fit exercise into your schedule no matter where you are. Do it at home or at work, outside or in the living room. Start building exercise into your daily routine and you'll start feeling better.