**Exercise? Who, me? 8 Strategies for Making the Leap**

You might not think of yourself as an athlete. But, given the chance, your body may be able to do things you never dreamed of.

You don't have to be sporty or skilled to reap the impressive benefits of regular exercise. They're right there for the taking — including more energy, better health and help managing stress.

**Creating your new active life**
Are you ready to begin moving more and feeling your best? Here are eight strategies to help kick off your future in fitness:

**1. Get a green light.** If you've been inactive, talk with your doctor before starting an exercise routine. That's especially important if you're pregnant, have any chronic conditions, or have been sidelined by injury or illness. Your doctor can suggest good workout options for you — and give you pointers on how to safely ease into new habits.

**2. Put it in writing.** Start your journey with a get-fit blueprint. Write out a weekly exercise plan. Be specific — it should include workout times and what you'll do. If you start a fitness journal, this can be a great way to track your progress over time, too. Also, see "Make a fitness contract."

**3. Pace yourself.** Slow and easy is the best way to begin. As your fitness level improves, you can gradually increase the length and intensity of your workouts.

What's a good goal for most healthy adults? Aim for at least 2.5 hours of moderate aerobic exercise a week. And, add strength exercises on two or more days.

**4. Find your footing.** Walking is a great workout for beginners. And, it's one that many people adopt for life. You can begin slowly — and walk farther or faster as your fitness develops. You just need sturdy, supportive shoes and a safe path to follow.

A tip for inspiration: Try using a pedometer. These simple step-counters can give you a daily goal to meet.

**5. Take 10.** If you're pressed for time, exercise in short bursts. Any moderate or vigorous aerobic activity you do for 10 minutes or more can count toward your weekly goal.

**6. Pair up, sign up, and show up.** Recruit an exercise buddy — or join a fitness class. You'll be more likely to stick with your plan when a friend, family member or group is counting on you.

**7. Explore new adventures.** How about hiking with friends? Or, taking a lesson at a local climbing wall? Sampling a variety of activities — solo or with others — can help you stay motivated and energized.

**8. Make moving a way of life.** Walk around the block whenever you take out the trash. Bike to work. Play a game of tag or soccer with the kids. Take extra trips when toting groceries or laundry.

Finally, don't give up the cause if you have a setback. That happens to seasoned athletes, too. Just go back to your plan — and start anew. 

**Active Life May Boost the Odds of Surviving Cancer**

Cancer researchers are finding that there may be power in a simple act: moving more. It may help people with cancer heal and stay well, too. A study surveyed people before and after a colon cancer diagnosis. Those who led active lives had higher survival rates than the people who spent more time sitting. This isn't the first study to link activity and benefits for people with cancer. Other research has shown that it's both safe and helpful for those with breast, prostate and other types of cancer.

While it isn't a cure for cancer, moderate exercise during and after treatment may:

Increase strength Boost mood and self-esteem

 Ease stress and anxiety Reduce fatigue