

WEDDING PLANS PROVIDED

THE MOTIVATION!!

To the gym ... in a hurry !!!

Three months before my wedding, I decided that I wanted to lose some weight and get in better shape.

Like many women, I found “diet” and “exercise” to be nagging and dreaded words that brought no motivation to change. I would stay on track for a week, maybe two, then find myself right back where I started.

I just couldn't find the time or energy to devote to exercising, and fast food french fries were just too tasty. When I didn't see results immediately, I would get discouraged and lose any motivation that I had managed to summon up.

But this time I knew I had to do something differently. I soon abandoned my old idea of “diet” and “exercise” as I began to learn about the importance of physical activity for my overall health and well being.

Armed with a different perspective and a definite goal, I decided to make some changes. I want to share some things I have learned along this road to better health.

Change your perspective

First, block out all those images of skinny people in tight outfits running for an hour, five days a week. Forget the claims of a fabulous stomach in seven days.

The goal is to be more physically active, not become a fitness maniac. Physical activity is so much more than “exercise” or “fitness”; it can be anything to make you move more than you do now.

The best part is that new research shows that physical activity doesn't have to be strenuous to achieve health benefits. Forget the days of “no pain, no gain.” Just 30 minutes of moderate activity accumulated over the entire day can benefit your health, making you look and feel better. Now, this is do-able!

Physical activity is everywhere. It's at home, at work, in your neighborhood. You can choose to set aside time in your day to be more physically active—take a walk, go to a health club, or participate in a recreation or sport activity.

Or you can just make physical activity a part of your day—work in the yard, vacuum, take the long way, walk the dog.



I chose to join a health club. I lift weights for strength, stretch for flexibility, and swim and use an upper arm ergometer (bicycle for your arms) for aerobic exercise.


A purposeful increase in physical activity made a huge difference for me. I soon found that I didn't get as tired during the day. My daily activities were easier, because I had more strength and endurance. My clothes fit better. Overall, I just felt better.

Getting started

This is an opportunity to make choices for your own health. The first step is to decide that your health is important enough to make changes. No matter how long you've been sitting on that couch, it's never too late to be more active.

Once you've made the choice, the key is deciding where to begin and staying motivated. Here are some hints for getting started and sticking with it.

- Remember that any increase in physical activity is better than doing nothing.
- Find something you like to do to that increases your level of physical activity. The more fun you have, the more likely you'll want to do it.
- Set realistic and achievable short-term goals. Avoid large, vague goals such as getting in shape.
- Don't attempt too much too fast. Increase your physical activity in small increments over time. You can start with as little as five minutes a day. If it is part of your daily routine, you are more likely to stick with it.
- Talk to your doctor and make sure you know your body and are aware of any health or safety issues that might affect the way you choose to be physically active.
- Involve your spouse, a friend, kids, or pets to make it more enjoyable.
- If your old habits return, don't worry; tomorrow can be a fresh start.
- Find some way to create accountability. Have a friend or family member ask how you are doing with your goals or chart your progress.
- If you find yourself getting bored, find a different activity. The possibilities are endless.
- Reward yourself!

My wedding day has passed and I reached my first goal, but this is just the beginning. If I am going to stay healthy and independent and continue to do the things I love, I know I have to remain active. I've found the benefits far outweigh the effort. You can do this! Don't wait any longer! Isn't your health worth it? 

By Lauren Howard, Consultant, NC Office on Disability and Health



SPORTS PROVIDE FAR-REACHING BENEFITS

The benefits of participating in sports for girls and women, according to the National Women's Health Information Center, include these:

For girls, research has shown that participation in sports and physical activities:

- Helps develop skills in leadership and team building
- Reduces risks of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and osteoporosis
- Boosts mental health, self-confidence, and self-esteem
- Reduces the risks of dropping out of school, taking up smoking or becoming pregnant as a teen
- Increases the likelihood of getting good grades and going to college
- Increases the likelihood of developing good health habits and getting hooked on exercise

For women, sports and regular physical activity:

- Are a good stress reducer and form of weight control
- Provide opportunity for positive social interactions and support
- Decrease the likelihood of obesity, heart disease, osteoporosis, stroke, certain cancers, and other problems
 - Help reduce the symptoms or severity of conditions such as diabetes and arthritis
 - Reduce feelings of fatigue and increase energy levels
 - Reduce feelings of depression and anxiety
 - Increase strength and endurance
 - Improve flexibility, mobility and coordination

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

National Women's Health Information Center

800-994-WOMAN
<www.4woman.org/>

Women's Sports Foundation

800-227-3988
<www.lifetimetv.com/WoSport>

Choose to Move campaign

888-MY-HEART
<www.women.americanheart.org>

Disabled Sports USA

301-217-0960
<www.dsusa.org/>



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES

NCPAD

National Center on Physical Activity and Disability promotes healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities by providing fact sheets, information and resources from the latest research, directories of health and leisure organizations, and accessible recreation facilities and equipment vendors.

<www.ncpad.org>

Email at <ncpad@uic.edu>

Phone: 800-900-8086 (voice and TTY) or Fax 312-355-4058.

Access to Recreation

catalog of adaptive recreation and exercise equipment

800-634-4351

Active Living, magazine

905-957-6016

Email: <activeliv@aol.com>

Disabled Sports USA

451 Hungerford Dr., Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850,
301-217-0960
<www.dsusa.org/>

Special Olympics International

1325 G St. NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
<www.specialolympics.org>

Wheelchair Sports USA

3595 East Fountain Blvd., Suite L-1
Colorado Springs, CO 80910
719-574-1150
<www.wsusa.org/>

IF YOU DECIDE TO JOIN A HEALTH CLUB

If you decide to join a health club as a way to be more active, here are some things to keep in mind. Remember that it's always a good idea to talk with your doctor before beginning an exercise program.

- Be prepared to pay between \$20 and \$50 per month for membership, plus any enrollment fees.
- Ask about scholarships or other financial aid, if you think you might qualify.
- Take a tour and check out the accessibility based on your own needs.
- Ask about programs and services to make sure they fit your interests.
- Make sure the equipment is clean and well maintained.
- Ask if the staff have experience working with people with disabilities. If not, make sure there is at least one certified fitness trainer on staff to help you get started.
- Make sure you feel welcome and are treated like any other paying member.
- If you are not familiar with the equipment, make sure you receive an orientation from a qualified staff member before using it to prevent injury.

- Consider a couple of sessions with a certified personal trainer to help you know where to start and how to progress and to make sure you are exercising safely.
- You can always consult a physical therapist or recreation therapist if you have questions about adapting exercises or equipment.
- It's important that you understand your body so you can communicate your limitations and abilities to staff or a personal trainer.
- If you need assistance on a regular basis, consider joining with a friend or family member.

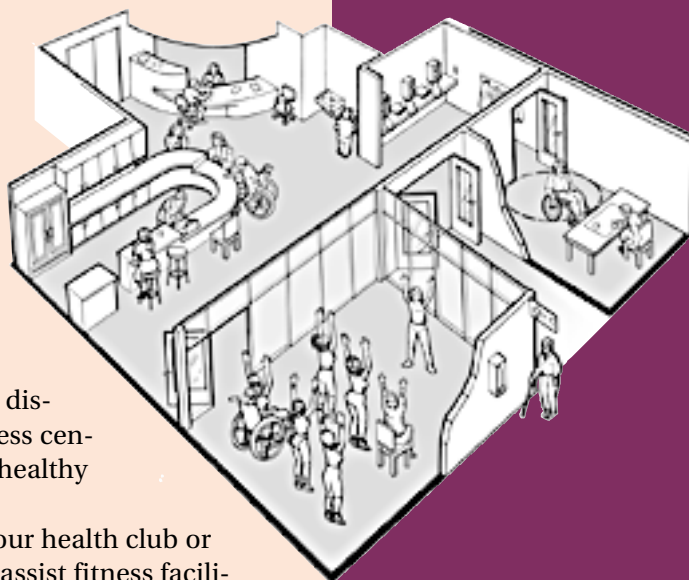
TIPS ON REMOVING BARRIERS TO HEALTH CLUBS, FITNESS FACILITIES

Along with much of the population, people with disabilities look toward health clubs, gyms and fitness centers as a means to be more active and achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Now there's a guide that you can share with your health club or gym that provides information and strategies to assist fitness facilities to be welcoming and useable for anyone who would like to improve or maintain their health through exercise and physical activity.

Some of the things you will find in the guide include:

- ideas for reaching and welcoming individuals with disabilities and older adults
- guidelines for creating universally useable fitness facilities
- highlights on selected Americans with Disabilities Act features that are relevant to health and fitness centers
- ideas for adapting existing equipment for different ability levels
- pointers on how to purchase equipment to accommodate a wide range of users



**For a free copy of
*Removing Barriers to Health Clubs
and Fitness Facilities*, contact:**

NC Office on Disability and Health
UNC-CH, CB 8185

Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8185

Phone: 919-966-2932

Email <bogues@mail.fpg.unc.edu>.

The guide may also be ordered or downloaded from the NCODH web site at <www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh>.

ECU'S APPROACH TO GETTING EVERYONE UP AND MOVING

East Carolina University in Greenville has one of the best adapted recreation programs for students, faculty, staff, and community members among the major universities in North Carolina.

The Adapted Recreation and Intramural Sport Enrichment Program, called ARISE, includes modified sports and recreation activities and instruction in an integrated setting. Here's a sample of what's offered:

- **A fitness program** that includes weight-lifting clinics with aerobics and a weight room that's wheelchair accessible.
- **A life-style program** that includes classes on swimming, softball, tennis, volleyball and handcrank cycling. Swimming pools have ramps, a lift, and a wheelchair for access into the pools and while using the special needs shower/ changing room.
- **Adventure programs** with trips to snow ski, kayak, canoe, camp, scuba dive, and monthly wall climbing for beginners.
- **A Wheelchair Basketball League** with sport wheelchairs provided.
- **The Wheel Power Dance Troupe** which is open to individuals with any type of disability as well as those without a disability.
- **A Partners in Education, Recreation and Leisure program** that pairs someone with a disability with a knowledgeable exercise partner.
- **Annual Adapted Sports Day.**
- **Other clinics and workshops** offered periodically include adapted water skiing, sea kayaking, air hockey, billiards tournaments and bowling.



Most ARISE activities are aimed at people with varying skill levels. All activities are accessible with special equipment. For example, the indoor pool is equipped with a Hoyer Lift; the fitness areas have a wheelchair accessible weight machine and a

stationary upperbody cycle. A hand-crank bike is available for use on the track.

For more details about the ARISE program, call 252-328-6387. The ARISE web site is: <[www.recservecu.edu / recserv/Intramural/ARISEMain.htm](http://www.recservecu.edu/recserv/Intramural/ARISEMain.htm)>.

