

Exercising Through 2012: How to Keep Moving into the New Year

By Joseph Agostinelli, PT, DPT

After a lengthy and celebratory holiday season, the New Year presents the opportunity for a figurative fresh start, a chance to create resolutions to address that which we would most like to improve about ourselves. Many times, resolutions often focus around exercise, no surprise considering the many meals enjoyed with family and friends in the past weeks, combined with the quick and harsh arrival of winter this year, preventing us from enjoying time outside.

Also common, unfortunately, is a lack of adherence to these resolutions, as old habits often defeat new ambition.

However, there are a few strategies you can employ to give yourself the best chance at meeting your 2012 exercise goal(s):

Pick an exercise or activity you enjoy. “Working out” does not necessarily mean having to exercise until you are exhausted and sweating. It is much easier to stick to an activity that you actually like doing! Walking is certainly a good choice as it is safe on joints and can be done both outdoors and indoors. City park districts often offer myriad activities, both individual and social, throughout the year.

Set a concrete goal. Often, exercise programs or goals are set rather nebulously: “I am going to walk more.” Establish how many days a week you plan on exercising, and what your exercise will be. Hold yourself to that number, either by keeping a journal or having a friend or family member monitor your progress.

Reward yourself. Enjoy the fruits of your labor! Give yourself something to aspire to: “If I exercise 4 times every week this month, I’ll treat myself to that show downtown I’ve wanted to see.” Having a reward can help motivate you on days when you feel like skipping a day of exercise.

Tweak your lifestyle. Exercise can be more than a block of time to fit into your already busy schedule. Take the stairs versus the elevator, or park further from the grocery store or mall.

Some mild achiness or soreness is to be expected with any new exercise regimen. However, persistent or more severe soreness should be addressed by your physician. Often, they will refer you to a physical therapist who can work with you on creating an exercise program to help you achieve and maintain your 2012 New Year’s resolution!



Article submitted by Joseph Agostinelli, PT, DPT, Director of OAD Orthopaedic Rehabilitation in Naperville. OAD Orthopaedics is a full-service orthopaedic practice with 23 specialists in Warrenville, Naperville, Wheaton, Carol Stream, Bartlett and Glen Ellyn. Areas of orthopaedic and musculoskeletal expertise include sports medicine; hand/upper extremity; spine-back and neck; physiatry; foot and ankle; joint replacement, reconstruction and revision; and work-related injuries. For more information, call (630) 225-BONE (2663) and visit www.OADortho.com.