

MAYO CLINIC EmbodyHealth

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Bypass your fitness obstacles

Your joints hurt. You get winded. Your muscles tire easily. You should avoid exercising, right?

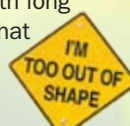
Probably not. Some form of exercise is beneficial for almost everyone. But you do need to take your physical limitations into account. With your doctor's OK, consider these ideas and create a fitness program that's right for you.

▼ Challenge: You have joint pain.

You may think that exercise will aggravate your joint pain, but keeping the muscles around your joints strong is crucial to maintaining and protecting joint health.

■ **Exercise tips:** Choose low-impact exercises, such as walking, swimming or other water-based exercise. In addition to aerobic exercise, include gentle stretching, range-of-motion and muscle-strengthening activities.

■ **Things to avoid:** Don't overdo it with long or strenuous workouts. Activities that put stress on your joints, such as running and tennis, may increase joint inflammation and pain.



▼ Challenge: You lack aerobic endurance.

You may think you're too out of shape to exercise, but almost anyone can slowly build aerobic endurance.

■ **Exercise tips:** Choose an activity you enjoy, such as biking or walking, and start out with as little as five minutes of that activity at a time. As you progress, gradually add time (one to three minutes a session) to your workout schedule. Set a long-term goal of achieving 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week. Slow, steady progress is best.

■ **Things to avoid:** You may be tempted to dive right in, but be wary of overexerting yourself. If you feel dizzy, lightheaded or nauseated, slow down and take a break, or stop and try again tomorrow.

▼ Challenge: You lack muscle strength.

You may think only serious weightlifters see results, but a modest weight training program can increase muscle strength and endurance.

■ **Exercise tips:** Whether you're using free weights, resistance bands or machines, make sure you're doing the exercises properly. Talk to your doctor, physical therapist or personal trainer about your technique. Train at least twice a week, exercising your major muscle groups. Start slowly with one set of eight to 15 slow repetitions and gradually add weight as you progress. Use smooth, steady movements, and remember to breathe with every repetition.

■ **Things to avoid:** Don't push your body to lift too much weight too soon. Avoid jerking or thrusting movements, and don't strength train the same muscle group two days in a row.



✓ **If you're over 40, have an injury or medical condition, or smoke, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. But even if you face physical challenges, you and your doctor can devise a fitness program that's right for you.**



CHRIS SENNA, JUPITERIMAGES, PUNCHSTOCK

WANT MORE INFORMATION? See page 8 for an online resource.

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Wayne County Four Star: Offering Affordable, Quality Health Care for Businesses, Residents

Most employers learn quickly that keeping **healthy, trained workers on the job is good for business**. On average, businesses lose more than 20 percent of their staff annually to turnover. Often, this number is higher for small businesses.

With the cost of staff replacement estimated at one-half to five times an employee's salary, any health care program that helps keep employees healthy **and** on the job **is** a good investment.

The Wayne County Four Star Health Program recognized early that providing comprehensive health coverage for low- and mid-level workers not only improves employee retention, it also helps residents cope with rising health care costs.

With total annual medical costs for a family of four reaching more than \$15,600, according to the 2008 Milliman Medical Index, that same family making less than \$30,000 has few

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