

Exercising on a Budget

You do not need a pricey gym membership or fancy equipment to get regular exercise. With a little creativity, you can find many ways to exercise for little or no money. With use of the internet, you can get free information, workouts, and even videos from various sources. But, before you start a new exercise routine, be sure you check with your healthcare provider to ensure you are ready to move.



Take a Walk

Don't underestimate the power of walking. Despite it being low-impact and not that intense compared to other cardio workouts, the benefits are far from ordinary. Walking is one of the easiest and least expensive forms of exercise. All you need is a good pair of comfortable shoes and you can start reaping the benefits with just 30 minutes a day.

- Start every day with a power walk.
- Walk the dog.
- Walk with your kids, family, or friends.
- Do a mall walk in bad weather.
- Take a walk at lunch or on your work break.
- Walk to errands and appointments.
- Join a walking club.
- Take a daily walk after dinner.

Create a Home Gym

The gym isn't the only place you can get a great workout. Sure, you'll have more machines and classes to choose from. But, if you're trying to save money, you can easily set up a simple home gym. You do not need expensive exercise gear and equipment to have a home gym.

- **Buy a set or two of weights.** You can look for these at garage sales or use Facebook Marketplace for dumbbells and kettlebells. Watch for sales at your local sporting goods stores or online fitness stores.
- **Buy some resistance bands.** You can buy a pack of these from Amazon. Great piece of equipment that is inexpensive and doesn't take up a lot of room.
- **Use chairs and stools.** Chairs can work as props for doing certain exercises, such as leg lifts. A low, sturdy stool can be used for step training.
- **Hit the stairs.** Who needs a stair machine when you have the old-fashioned kind in your house? You can create your own stair workout by walking up and down your stairs. Play some music to keep you going and increase your workout by a song each time.

- **Look for used equipment.** If you have a little money to spend, you can find deals on used fitness equipment at yard sales and thrift shops.
- **Invest in cheaper fitness items.** Buying a few small fitness tools can help you vary your workout. A fitness ball can help strengthen your abs and improve your balance. Use a jump rope for a great cardio workout.
- **Use technology.** There are so many free fitness classes available online. Check YouTube, Netflix, and even Amazon for free options. Use smartphone apps to help you plan and track your workouts. Many are free, and some cost just a small amount of money.

Use Your Body Weight

Whether you workout indoors at home or outdoors, there are many exercises you can do that use your own body weight to help you tone muscle. These include:



- Lunges
- Squats
- Push-ups
- High knees
- Jumping jacks
- Mountain climbers
- Planks
- And dozens more

To make sure you use the proper form, go to the online exercise library at the American Council on Exercise. They also have sample workout routines you can try. YouTube is great for this too.

Look for Low-cost Fitness Options

Many sports and activities are free or cost little to begin with. A great place to start is with your local Parks and Rec.

- **Free classes.** Many cities and towns offer free fitness classes for the public. Check your local paper or look online to find out what's available in your area. Older adults may find inexpensive classes at a local senior center.
- **Use local courts.** Most communities have public basketball and tennis courts.
- **Go swimming.** Find a local pool or lake and go for a swim.
- **Try other low-cost options.** Try ice skating, jogging, hiking, volleyball, or in-line skating. Even cycling is affordable if you dust off an old bike or buy a used one.

Dust off Old Fitness Equipment

If you haven't ventured into your basement or garage in a while, now might be a good time to see what you've been storing there. Most of us have old fitness equipment lying around, things we bought and never used, or things we couldn't figure out what to do with. You don't want to use anything that's obviously in disrepair, but you can use them for your workouts if you find something in good shape. A few things you might find lying around:

- Baseballs, footballs, and basketballs
- Tennis rackets
- Bicycles
- Frisbees
- Paddleball games
- Mini trampolines
- Mini steppers
- Medicine balls
- Boxing gloves or pads
- A treadmill hiding under your clothes!

You don't need to break the bank to cultivate your wellness. You can exercise without spending any money at all. How much money you have in your bank account doesn't have to stop you from meeting your fitness goals.

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your
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