

# How to Make Exercise Part of Your Healthy Life Plan



By Gayle Crist,  
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When I started life coaching in 2002, I named my business Healthy Life Planning because my goal was to help people plan healthier, happier lives—the key word being “plan”. You have to plan for a healthy, happy life; it doesn’t just happen on its own. I wanted to be a coach who supported folks in following through on their plans so they could reach their health-related goals.

I’m sure you’ve heard that “those who fail to plan, plan to fail.” That’s why, as a coach, **I’m passionate about helping people come up with practical, doable strategies to succeed in reaching their healthy living goals.** And one of the most common areas they’ve needed help planning for and following through on is EXERCISE—a key element for a healthy life.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/physical-activity>), more than 80% of adults don’t meet the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans for both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. Yikes!

I also recently read that 50% of American adults don’t exercise at all, and only 20% exercise regularly. I was shocked! I already knew that, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 42% of adults in the U.S. are obese. So I guess the fact that so few Americans make exercise a part of their lives shouldn’t be surprising. But I had no idea that I, who exercise every day, am one of such a small minority of committed exercisers.

If you’re someone who regularly incorporates exercise into your schedule (at least a few times a week), congratulations! I’m sure you can attest to how it benefits you both physically and mentally.

But, if, like many Americans, you have the best intentions regarding exercise but find it challenging to make it part of your everyday life, it’s probably because you haven’t got a plan—a

plan that is realistic for you today and that you can stick to tomorrow and the next day, next month, next year.

Here are a few of the reasons clients tell me they don’t have an exercise plan:

- 1) I start work early and can’t get up earlier to exercise.
- 2) If I wait until after work, I’m too tired to go to the gym.
- 3) I don’t get much of a lunch hour at work, so I can’t exercise then.
- 4) I can’t afford to join a gym or health club.
- 5) I have young kids and nobody to watch them while I exercise.

And here are some possible solutions to address these issues:

- 1) If you can’t imagine becoming a morning exerciser, consider a 30-minute walk at lunchtime, after work, or after dinner. Doing this even 3 times a week will do wonders
- 2) I can relate to being too tired to go to the gym after work. I can’t tell you how many clients say the gym is right on their way home, but they wind up driving right past it even when they have their workout clothes in the car. Exercise does take some energy, so it’s best to plan it when you’re most peppy—even if that means only on the weekends. Some exercise is always better than none (think walking the dog, joining a pickleball group, swimming with your kids in the summer... the possibilities are endless).
- 3) If your lunch hour is short, how about doing a walk to and from the local deli? Or just a couple times around the building you work in? Again, some movement is

preferable to none.

- 4) You don’t have to join a gym or health club in order to exercise. Go out and rake leaves, walk with a friend at a local park, bicycle around your neighborhood—anything you can think of to get your heart rate up a bit.
- 5) I had young kids when I first got divorced and was living alone with them in an apartment, so I wondered how I’d get to the Y to do my morning swim 3 times a week. Luckily, I felt comfortable leaving my oldest (a middle-schooler) with my daughter while I was out for an hour, making sure the next-door

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neighbors were home in case he needed any help. It worked out great. Many gyms, including our local YMCAs, offer on-premises childcare parents can use while they exercise.

How about you? Can you relate to any of these reasons for not exercising? But you’ve been promising yourself for a long time that you want to get active? If so, give me a call. I’ll help you create and stick to a reasonable exercise plan that works for you. Let’s talk!

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Gayle Crist, M.S., is a life coach based in Ambler. She helps people create healthier, happier lives; find more life balance; navigate life transitions such as separation/divorce; start a business; get organized to complete an important project; write/edit their first book, or follow through on other life goals. Gayle is also a writer, editor, and proofreader ([www.cristeditorialservices.com](http://www.cristeditorialservices.com)) and the author of *How I Met My Second Husband Online at Age 50*. Information about her life coaching services is at [www.healthylifeplanning.com](http://www.healthylifeplanning.com), and her life coaching blog is found at <https://gayle4244.wixsite.com/website/blog>. Contact Gayle at 267-245-3023 or [coach@healthylifeplanning.com](mailto:coach@healthylifeplanning.com).