

## **Exercising And Your New Year's Resolution!**

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It's about that time of year again, that time where everyone renews their annual New Year's Resolutions for the upcoming year. Many people "resolve" that they are going to lose weight and start exercising. Unfortunately, this resolution doesn't last past 30 days or so. Research shows the following on how long they stick with their resolutions:

- **Past the first week: 75%**
- **Past two weeks: 71%**
- **After one month: 64%**
- **After six months: 46%**

It is possible for people to stick to their goals that they set at the beginning of the year. Also, just because people have kidney failure doesn't mean they can't exercise and keep to their goals. In fact, the benefits of exercise and physical activity on end stage renal patients are plentiful. Research has shown that exercise helps reduce blood pressure, stabilize blood sugar levels, improves strength, endurance and flexibility, improves sleep, and improves how you feel!! All these benefits means you'll be able to do your daily activities without getting tired as fast and will reduce your risk for heart problems. Here are a few suggestions on planning your New Year's resolution:

### **A. Talk to Your Doctor Before Starting any Exercise Program**

Getting cleared to exercise by your doctors (primary physician *and* nephrologists) should be the first and most important step in starting any exercise plan. The idea here is to make sure that you do not have any physical illness or condition that will put you in danger while exercising. Your blood pressure and sugar levels should be under control and you should learn the cautions of exercise on these numbers. If there are other

physical barriers to exercise, discuss with your doctor what exercises would be right for you. The more you know about exercise and physical activity, the safer you'll be during the exercise.

### **B. Start With a Plan**

A New Year's resolution that includes exercise and physical activity is a GREAT way to start off the year. The best start is to identify an activity that you enjoy doing such as walking, swimming, dancing, yoga, whatever you find that you like. It is human nature for people will not stick with something that they dislike doing in the first place. Second, don't set goals that you probably won't achieve. Set a series of smaller goals and as a result, larger goals will be met. Finally, see what is available to you in the community such as a recreation center, YMCA, rehabilitation programs, even just outside your door!! Also, shopping malls around the country sometimes open early for early morning walkers so contact your local mall to see if they offer this in your town.

### **C. Set Realistic Goals**

If you're interested in exercising more, don't plan on running the New York marathon a week before the race!! Start with what you can do even if it's just a few steps in your house. Add a few minutes every week to where you're getting at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. The goal should be exercising 30-60 minutes most days of the week but if you're not ready for that, start with what you can do. For example, set a goal that you want to be able to walk around the block or to make it up the stairs in your house by next month. A series of smaller goals rather than long term goals are the type you want to shoot for. Also, planning for experiencing set backs is a key because setbacks will happen even with experienced exercisers. Taking a day off or getting off your goal from time to time is normal...the key is to keep *coming back*.

### **D. Keep a Log**

Of all the strategies for successfully reaching your goals, writing down you goal and the ways how to reach them is among the most powerful. The benefits of writing your exercises down are the at you can see your progress in terms of time and frequency to your goals. This makes for great refrigerator pin up material!! A log doesn't have to be anything special, just something that you can easily jot down what your doing in a few minutes.

The following is an example exercise log.

Date	Time	Pre Blood Pressure	Pre sugar	Exercise Type	Exercise Time	Post Blood pressure	Post sugar	Comments
01Jan	8:00AM	120/80	110	Walking	30 min	120/80	100	Felt good
02Jan	6:00 PM	120/80	105	Taking the stairs	15 min	130/90	100	Took 2 steps and then break and so on

### E. Set a Resolution With a Group of Friends

Encouragement from friends and family can have a huge impact on your ability to keep these goals not to mention that they too will gain the benefits of exercise. Arrange a walking group or a dance night out...anything that can help you with sticking to your goal. The “peer pressure” of coming to such arrangements will be a big motivator for you! Groups provide real support and besides making new friends, you’ll be inspired to keep coming and will have a group of people that can celebrate in reaching your goals!! Let’s kick off the New Year with a physically fit bang!!

### Reference Material

*Life Options Rehabilitation Council  
c/o Medical Education Institute, Inc.  
414 D'Onofrio Drive Suite 200  
Madison, WI 53719  
(800) 468-7777  
[www.lifeoptions.org](http://www.lifeoptions.org)*

*National Kidney Foundation  
Staying Fit With Kidney Disease  
30 East 33rd Street  
New York, NY 10016  
1-800-622-9010  
[www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org)*

*United States Department of Health and Human Services  
Small Step Program  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington DC 20201  
1-877-696-6775  
[www.smallstep.gov](http://www.smallstep.gov)*