

The Exercise Cheat Sheet

DISCLAIMER: Every individual has unique physical capabilities, health conditions, and fitness goals. The following evidence-based interventions are not personalized recommendations. Please consult with your primary care physician before beginning any new exercise program, especially if you have existing health conditions.

General Principles

- Consistency is more important than intensity
- Any movement is better than no movement, and it's never too late to start!
- Make exercise as easy as possible to incorporate it into your daily routine
- Choose activities you enjoy to increase long-term adherence
- Start small and build gradually over time

Cardiovascular Exercise

- Target: 200 minutes per week total
- Frequency: 3-4 sessions per week of 60-75 minutes each
- Intensity: Mix of low, moderate, and occasional high-intensity work
- Zone 2 training (able to talk but not easily) is particularly beneficial for longevity

Resistance/Weight Training

- Target: 2-4 sessions per week
- Focus on compound movements that work multiple muscle groups
- Include all major muscle groups to avoid imbalance
- Gradually increase resistance over time
- Start with machines if new to strength training

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

- Target: 1-2 sessions per week
- Classes are an easy option.
- Other options include 4x4 protocol, on-off sprints, and tabatas

Daily Movement

- Aim for 7,000-10,000 steps daily
- Break up sitting time with brief movement every 30-60 minutes

- Incorporate “exercise snacks” (1-3 minutes of vigorous activity) throughout the day
- Consider active transportation (walking/biking instead of driving when possible)

Keys to Adherence

- Develop self-belief in your ability to maintain an exercise routine. *You can do this!*
- Consider using technology (fitness trackers, apps) to monitor progress
- Exercise with others when possible (classes, partners, teams)
- Connect your exercise to your “Why”—your deeper purpose for prioritizing health^[NN1]

[NN1]I love this cheat sheet!