5 Strategies to Build a Movement Mindset

By Lacy Wolff, MS

Most people are aware that physical activity is important. Not only does it reduce the risk of chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, physical activity also helps manage mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. Even though we know this, many of us still struggle to get enough physical activity for good health (150 minutes a week).

Top barriers to physical activity include: lack of time, lack of motivation, lack of equipment, or lack of education and awareness of what to do. If you have found yourself thinking that you can’t be physically active due to one or more of these reasons, you are not alone!

Shifting our mindset is a powerful way to get us moving more often. Here are 5 strategies to reframe how you see physical activity.

1. **Stop using the word exercise**, unless you already LOVE to exercise. Use the word **movement** instead. Our brains are very good at searching for things that provide us pleasure and staying away from things that cause us pain. If you find yourself thinking *I don’t like exercise* try reframing and saying *I am going to* ***move*** *my body today*!
2. **Get away from the *all or nothing* mentality**. 5 minutes of stretching, 10 minutes of walking, and even 1 minute of a strength movement can be very beneficial and adds up! If you are thinking, “*I don’t have time to move today*,” reframe and ask yourself, “*how much time can I give to my health today?”*
3. **Keep it simple**. You don’t need any fancy equipment, apps, or programs to move. Walking, jogging, riding a bicycle, using your own body weight or simply stretching in your chair are all beneficial. If you find yourself saying, “*I don’t have equipment”* or “*I don’t have a program*,” try reframing and tell yourself*, “I only need my body in order to move*.”
4. **Use the Tiny Habits Method**. If you find yourself thinking, “*I’m not motivated to move,”* try finding small ways to stack movement into your existing activities and celebrate your wins. An example of this strategy is: *After I wash my hands, I will do 5 body weight squats and celebrate by pumping my fists in the air with a hearty “YEAH!”* If you wash your hands 5 times each day you will add up 25 air squats! You can learn more about this evidence based strategy in the [One Degree of Difference webinar recording.](https://www.gotostage.com/channel/a46fbe06603048aab38de36e55bbdb5a/recording/35d3ed17d9bb408192894c0e910de8ca/watch)
5. **Join us for a 21-Day Virtual Fitness Challenge.** Between July 11th and July 29th, join fitness instructors from OAG, DPS, ERS, and TxDOT for: Zumba, Strength Training, Barre, Core Flex & Stretch, Yoga and more! We will be giving away door prizes to the ten people who participate in the most classes! All classes will be offered via Zoom and are posted on the [DSHS Work Well Texas Virtual Fitness Calendar](http://www.wellness.state.tx.us/Challenge.htm). Log your class participation through the [21-Day Virtual Fitness Challenge log form.](file:///C:\Users\LWolff\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\C39X4YCD\21-Day%20Virtual%20Fitness%20Challenge%20log%20form)