walk at the end of your workday.

- **I’m too old to exercise**
  Age should never be a barrier to begin or maintain an active lifestyle. For individuals who are over 65, it is imperative to get some form of exercise every day. Senior citizens can reduce many of their musculoskeletal and arthritic problems by strengthening their bones and muscles with modest walking, stretching and weight bearing exercise.

- **I’m too embarrassed**
  My neighbors will laugh at me or the folks at the gym will be silently critiquing my unshapely body. Why not walk in the morning when few people are around — those who are out there will probably give you an encouraging smile. According to a study conducted by Stanford University, those who exercise at home were more likely to stick with a fitness program than those who joined a gym or an aerobic class.

Have you ever felt that life is just too short? Then take heart! Your odds of living into your 90’s and beyond have never been so good. And remember, you do not need another magic pill, a special diet or a liquid formula. Determine to be a good steward of your health and find a variety of ways to include more physical activity in your daily life.

**What does the Bible say about exercise?**

No, there is not a verse in Scripture that says, “Thou shalt exercise for 30-60 minutes every day.” Yet the Bible does picture patriarchs, prophets and everyday men and women working hard and getting lots of physical activity. In your imagination, can you see the prophet Elijah running a marathon after hearing the words of his intended fate from the wicked queen Jezebel or young David walking several miles daily, tending his father’s flock of sheep. Picture Jesus, during his three years of ministry, treading the dusty paths of Palestine or his disciples working all night, busy catching fish.

Computers, remote controls, golf carts, e-mail, cell phones, automatic doors and windows, power steering, elevators and escalators. These are a few of the words that describe our modern technical society. While we would not want to return to the ‘good old days’ of horses for transportation on dirt roads or using candles for light, the upsurge in technology is turning us into a nation of couch potatoes.

Lack of physical activity is costing us dearly. It has resulted in a higher risk of major killers such as coronary heart disease, all varieties of cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and obesity. On the other hand, the benefits of getting off the couch are numerous: burning more calories, lowering your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar, helping you to sleep better, warding off more colds and flu, reducing stress and generally improving your lifestyle.

But has your struggle to get into and stay in shape become a demanding duty and a grueling chore? Don’t give up! The following few suggestions can get you started on a program to get your body back in shape.

**Exercise should be enjoyable**

It is estimated that up to 70 percent of those who start an exercise program give up within four months because the physical activity was boring and uninteresting. If you don’t enjoy your exercise time, there is a very good chance you will not continue the program. One answer is to vary your physical activities...
each day. For example, in one week you could try these different activities: cycling at a leisurely pace (270 calories); playing a round of golf (375); raking leaves (270); mowing the lawn (305); enjoying a brisk walk through your neighborhood (270); and swimming at a moderate pace (545). (The calories listed are based on a 150 lb. person doing that exercise for one hour.)

Also, pay attention to your body clock. If you are a morning person, arrange your schedule so you complete your exercise program before breakfast. If you are a night owl, a good time to exercise is before a light supper and with at least three hours left before you go to bed.

Exercise on your own timetable
Many would-be exercisers never get going with a physical activity program because they can’t find time or they just simply balk at the prospect of a lengthy workout session. Instead of 30-60 minute workouts three times a week, try three 10-minute sessions each day. How about trying a simple stretching routine at your morning break or go up and down five flights of stairs in your office building for your afternoon break (good for your leg and thigh muscles too). When you get groceries, park your car at the farthest point in the parking lot and walk briskly to the store to get your groceries and briskly back to your car. Make monotonous exercise activities, like riding a stationary bicycle or walking on a treadmill, enjoyable by watching your favorite television program, listening to music or reading a good book.

And remember, those who exercise tend to burn more calories even when they are sleeping or resting on the couch.

Exercise musts
Use this FIT acronym for the three essential elements of a proper exercise program.

- **Frequency** — Scientific studies have shown that exercising a minimum of five times a week for those who are in good health and seven times a week for those who need to lose a few pounds is the best schedule. Regular exercise is the key.
- **Intensity** — How hard should you exercise? At the beginning of your exercise program, you should start with an easy stroll of one mile in 30 minutes and over time increase that to four miles per hour. Another way to look at this question is, are you reaching your target heart rate? Begin at 60 percent of your maximum heart rate and advance over time to between 75-80 percent.
- **Time** — How long should you exercise? If you are a beginner, you should start with 20-minute walks three times a week and build up to 30-40 minutes by the end of the first month. Increase your physical activity gradually and soon your natural desire to be energetic and active will help you reach your optimum level of exercise.

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses!
Does the very thought of going from being a “marshmallow” to being full of energy and physically fit make you break out with activity hives and a boxful of excuses? Here are the most common excuses for not taking time for daily exercise.

- **I don’t have enough time**
  Sorry, this one doesn’t count. We are all busy, but everyone can blend some type of activity into his or her schedule. For example, park at the far end of the shopping mall, use a push mower instead of a tractor and take the stairs instead of the elevator. If you engage in some form of exercise for ten minutes several times throughout the day, you will enjoy nearly the same benefits as a person who completes their physical activity in one longer session.

- **I’m too tired at the end of the day**
  The kind of fatigue that the majority of individuals have at the end of the day is a result of excessive mental activity due to work tension and anxiety. Since scientific evidence shows that daily physical activity actually reduces stress and mental fatigue, it pays to take a 30-minute