

Overcoming mental health obstacles to exercise

Source: [HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org)

So now you know that exercise will help you feel much better and that it doesn't take as much effort as you might have thought. But taking that first step is still easier said than done. Exercise obstacles are very real—particularly when you're also struggling with mental health. Here are some common barriers and how you can get past them.

Feeling exhausted. When you're tired or stressed, it feels like working out will just make it worse. But the truth is that physical activity is a powerful energizer. Studies show that regular exercise can dramatically reduce fatigue and increase your energy levels. If you are really feeling tired, promise yourself a 5-minute walk. Chances are, you'll be able to go five more minutes.

Feeling overwhelmed. When you're stressed or depressed, the thought of adding another obligation can seem overwhelming. Working out just doesn't seem doable. If you have children, managing childcare while you exercise can be a big hurdle. Just remember that physical activity helps us do everything else better. If you begin thinking of physical activity as a priority, you will soon find ways to fit small amounts into a busy schedule.

Feeling hopeless. Even if you're starting at "ground zero," you can still workout. Exercise helps you get in shape. If you have no experience exercising, start slow with low-impact movement a few minutes each day.

Feeling bad about yourself. Are you your own worst critic? It's time to try a new way of thinking about your body. No matter your weight, age or fitness level, there are others like you with the same goal of getting fit. Try surrounding yourself with people in your shoes. Take a class with people at a variety of fitness levels. Accomplishing even the smallest fitness goals will help you gain body confidence.

Feeling pain. If you have a disability, severe weight problem, arthritis, or any injury or illness that limits your mobility, talk to your healthcare provider [about ways to safely exercise](#). You shouldn't ignore pain, but rather do what you can, when you can. Divide your exercise into shorter, more frequent chunks of time if that helps, or try exercising in water to reduce joint or muscle discomfort.