

# Which exercise is best?

health

Exercise fads come and go almost as quickly as fad diets.

There's jogging, weight training, swimming, golf, dancing, cycling, aerobics, high-intensity interval training, team sports, tennis, cross-country skiing (though not so popular in the Southeast) and any combination of the above. If you look online long enough, you'll surely find someone who believes one of these forms of exercise is clearly better than any other.

In fact, clinically speaking, there is a form of exercise that's best: the one you'll actually do.

Many exercise regimens fail simply because, well, we never really liked them. We started jogging, even though we've always hated running. We bought a membership to a glamorous gym, even though we never have time to go there, and besides, exercising in front of other people makes us self-conscious. We bought a tennis racket with the best of intentions, but none of our friends play with any regularity so it's been consigned to the back of a closet (next to those running shoes).

It's hard enough to talk ourselves into getting up early in the morning or making time in the afternoon to exercise. It's even



harder when we truly loathe the exercise.

Exercise can improve our health only if we actually do it. And the options for getting exercise are wide open. All it takes is 30 minutes of exercise a day, five days per week, to see a meaningful change in your blood pressure, cholesterol, help you control your weight and more.

So, how can you squeeze in your 30 minutes of, well, whatever you enjoy?

## **If you hate exercise, make it about something else**

You hate the treadmill or the elliptical, in part, because it's so

boring. So make your time exercising about something other than exercise. Station the exercise equipment near a television or use a mounted rack to hold your tablet and stream a television show on Netflix, Amazon Prime, HBO Go, Hulu or any other entertainment service. Once you get into a series, your reason for getting up early or making time in the afternoon isn't for the exercise; it's so you can start the next episode of "Deadwood," "Outlander" or "The Wire."

## **Find a workout buddy**

You're not the kind of person who would stand up a friend and skip out on your social obligations, are you? Of course not. That's why finding a friend or two with whom you can exercise can be invaluable: it keeps you accountable. You're

By Saman Razzak, MD, Tanner Primary Care at Mirror Lake

less likely to skip out on exercise when that also means skipping out on your pals. And besides, having some companionship makes the activity less about exercise and more about the comradery and conversation.

### Don't let the weather get in the way

Georgia and Alabama can be great places to exercise outdoors – sometimes. At other times, the temperature plunges to bone-chilling cold or soars up toward “fry an egg on the sidewalk” hot. Rain, wind, early nightfall after daylight saving time and more can all make it hard to venture outdoors for our 30 minutes a day. Fortunately, there are plenty of free or nearly-free indoor opportunities throughout the region to get some fitness. You can find some local options on the Get Fit page at [GetHealthyLiveWell.org](http://GetHealthyLiveWell.org).

### Bored? Try something new

Maybe we really liked going for an evening walk or heading down to the pool for a few laps at first, but now these things just seem tedious. If you're bored with your routine, change it up and try



something new. Rent a bicycle and head out on the Carrollton GreenBelt, explore a new park or trail, or try a new activity. Even just changing up the kind of music you listen to while exercising can help break the monotony. And if the new activity doesn't work out as well as the old, at least you tried and your old routine is always ready and waiting for you.

If you're interested in learning more about health and fitness, check out Tanner's Get Healthy, Live Well newsletter. You can customize your free subscription with up to 30 health topics, including sections on diet, exercise, weight management and more.

Tanner Primary Care at Mirror Lake is located in Villa Rica, Ga. For more information, visit [www.primarycaremirrorlake.org](http://www.primarycaremirrorlake.org) or call 770.812.3839.

Dr. Razzak is board-certified in family medicine with Tanner Primary Care at Mirror Lake. She earned her medical degree from the Saba University School of Medicine in Saba, Netherlands-Antilles, and completed her residency in family medicine at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Dr. Razzak also holds a master's of public health in health organization and policy from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.