

Activity Cues

Many factors (or cues) in our environment can lead to being inactive. For example, after dinner you may automatically sit down in front of the TV (if you are not already there!). That is because you paired finishing dinner and watching TV many times in the past. Remember that you do have a choice. You could choose to take a walk after dinner instead of watching TV.

If you have been inactive for a while, you probably have many cues that trigger inactivity and few that trigger action. To become active regularly, you must add positive activity cues to your life. Over time, the cues will help to create a regular pattern of activity in your life.

What are some positive activity cues that you could put in place? Let's begin by visualizing where you live. What could you add to the living room that would prompt you to be active? What about the bedroom? The kitchen? Think about each room in your home and consider some of the suggestions below.

Living room or bedroom:

- Keep exercise shoes, bag, and equipment in sight (not in the closet).
- Hang an activity calendar and a graph of your activity in a visible place.
- Keep a stationary bike or exercise mat in front of the TV.
- Hang a photo or poster of an outdoor scene or people being active.
- Subscribe to a health or exercise magazine, and keep it visible.
- Find an exercise video you can do at home. Put it in your streaming queue.
- Put a note on the TV reminding you that a half hour of TV time could be used for a walk instead.



Activity Cues

Kitchen:

- Post motivational photos, outdoor scenes, or reminders to be active on the refrigerator.

Bathroom:

- Post a reminder on the mirror to be active during the day.

Garage:

- Keep the car in the garage. Maybe you will choose to walk to the neighbor's house (or store) instead of driving.
- Keep exercise shoes, bag, and equipment in the front seat of your car.
- Keep a bicycle in working condition and ready to ride. Store it in a visible place.

TV (or computer):

- Change your computer background to an outdoor scene or a picture of your favorite activity.
- Use commercials as your cue to do some activity (walk around, do jumping jacks, etc).

Time of day/week:

- Get in the habit of being active around the same time each day. For example, you could stretch for 10 minutes before breakfast or take a walk immediately after work.
- Create a weekly activity routine. Consider attending a weekly fitness class, or meeting up with a friend each week to play tennis or ride bikes.

