

Spring Clean Your Health Routine

It's time for Americans to spring clean their health routines. A large-scale [study](#) published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) shows inactivity can be worse for you than smoking, diabetes or having heart disease.

Matt Janus is an OSF HealthCare exercise physiologist in Pontiac, Illinois. He says making recommended activity a priority can impact a person's overall wellbeing in a myriad of ways.

"The 150 minutes of movement a week that the American Heart Association recommends – that goes leaps and bounds toward reducing things like your risk for heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, pretty much anything and everything," says Janus.

Despite that, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says only 23% of Americans get enough exercise. To help reverse that trend, the American Heart Association has designated April as Move More Month.

The month-long awareness campaign is designed to encourage people to take part in more physical activity on a regular basis, and to highlight the health benefits of exercise.

For some, however, starting and maintaining an exercise routine is a tall order. Janus says any additional movement is better than nothing. He recommends setting small, obtainable goals to start.

"Figure out what your specific goals are and then break that down into smaller goals that don't seem so daunting and overwhelming. So if your main goal is starting a consistent exercise routine or maybe losing weight or something like that, start with some small daily goals like getting five more minutes of activity than you usually do, or maybe replacing a usual junk food snack with a fruit or a vegetable. Just making those small changes over time can add up to your big overall goal," Janus explains.

And when it comes to fitness, activity doesn't have to mean time in the gym, if that's not something that appeals to you. Gardening, walking the dog, or even living room dance parties all count as movement minutes. Janus says finding an activity you enjoy can help with motivation in the long run.

"If you like it, then it'll increase your chances of sticking with it. You know, if you're doing something that you absolutely hate, and forcing yourself to do it, it's going to be a lot harder to adhere to that routine. So find what you enjoy that gets your body moving and stick with that, and it'll set you up for success," he says.

Janus also wants to point out – you are not in this alone. There are plenty of resources to help you start and maintain a fitness routine. Your primary care physician should be the first step, especially for those who have pre-existing health conditions.

"Chat with your doctor. They might be able to help you as well with any specific goal setting to do and things to work towards."

And Janus also says slip-ups will happen. If your motivation comes and goes, it's never too late to start again.

Not sure where to start? Go to osfhealthcare.org to find a provider who fits your needs to help you get on the right path to activity and wellness.