

# “I Just Gotta Get Going”

Ever find yourself saying this phrase? Many individuals have good intentions to follow a healthy lifestyle by exercising often and eating healthy foods, but fall short of their goal because they aren't motivated enough to get started. Being physically active throughout the day is beneficial in many ways. Physical activity is defined as “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure”. This means the intensity and duration of physical activity may vary from day to day, but the main goal is to get moving! The transtheoretical model (TTM) is a figure that uses stages of change to encourage behavior change interventions. When an individual is presented with what stage of change they are in, they are more likely to be motivated to progress to the next stage. Below are a few statements related to physical activity. Which statement best fits with how you currently see yourself, in regards to physical activity?

- Stage 1: I am not regularly physically active, and I don't have intentions to become active in the next six months.
- Stage 2: I am not regularly physically active, but thinking about starting in the next six months.
- Stage 3: I currently do some physical activity, but not enough to meet the description of regular physical activity.
- Stage 4: I am regularly physically active, but only began in the last six months.
- Stage 5: I am regularly physically active and have been for more than six months.

These statements reflect “Stages of Change”.

**Stage 1: Precontemplation**

**Stage 2: Contemplation**

**Stage 3: Preparation**

**Stage 4: Action**

**Stage 5: Maintenance**

Committing to a health behavior change can feel difficult, so what needs to happen for someone to accomplish this change? Here is a solution:

**The precontemplators (Stage 1)** should learn about physical activity by reading, watching videos, and asking others about it. If possible, write down the pros and cons to adding physical activity to your lifestyle and rank the benefits most important to you.

**The contemplators (Stage 2)** are encouraged to observe a fitness class, or tour a fitness facility. They can set smaller goals (5 minutes of walking) to begin developing plans of getting started (when, where, what activity, with whom).

**The preparers (Stage 3)** should try tracking their physical activity on a pedometer, cell-phone, or written activity log and track their progress towards their goals. Once a goal is met, reward yourself.

**The actors (Stage 4)** can make larger fitness goals, as they are currently physically active. Sign up for a future event, like a fun walk or 5k.

**The maintainers (Stage 5)** can prepare for a future setback from physical activity and plan to get back on track afterwards. They can find new ways to stay active or incorporate their physical activity into their daily habits. Spend time walking with a friend or do muscle toning exercises while during TV commercials. Try to lead by example and invite family or friends to become active like you!