

Your Own Personal Spring Training

If you've been hibernating through the long winter months, it's time to put the remote on hold, shake off the seasonal doldrums and get your summer game on. March holds the first day of spring and although the weather can still pack a wallop, take heart: as the old Yankee proverb goes, "winter's back has been broken."

For many of us, the transition from couch potato to our beach buff best doesn't happen overnight. Take a cue from professional baseball ballplayers. They kick into a disciplined training regime about six weeks before opening day. Here are some tips to get your own personal spring training in gear.

Start an exercise routine. More and more studies point to the health dangers of a sedentary lifestyle. The American Heart Association recommends that adults engage in moderate exercise for at least 150 minutes per week, or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise. For even more benefits, adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or high intensity that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.

Get plenty of light. There's evidence that exposure to light early in the day can help to regulate our internal body clocks. Some scientists say that 20 to 30 minutes of morning light can positively impact overall health, weight and mood. Plan early morning walks to jump-start your day.



Have a plan for bad weather days. Get outdoors as much as you can, but for stormy days, download exercise apps that offer indoor-friendly routines like Pocket Yoga, Fitness Builder and SworKit. There are dozens of free and low cost choices - read reviews to find the one that will best suit your exercise style.

Add more fresh foods to your diet. In the winter, we often increase our intake of carbohydrate-heavy foods, but spring is a time to lighten up. Cut down on heavy and processed foods and replace them with more fresh fruits and veggies, especially locally grown produce.

Get a handle on stress. Make sure you get enough sleep and work on managing your time. Focus on controlling what you can and work exercise and meditation into your daily routine.

Take a course. Keep your mind mentally sharp and fit too. Challenge yourself with learning something new. Learn a language to plan for your next trip or take a course to hone your job skills.

Log in to www.HigherEdEAP.com for a wide array of exercise and nutrition resources, tips for reducing stress, free professional development courses and more.