



HEALTH & FITNESS

Get in Shape: 8-Week Starter Plan

A simple, safe, step-by-step plan for going from the couch to a steady, confident jog.

A NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

Nobody on our team started in great shape. We started the same way you will: one walk at a time, a little sore, a little skeptical. This plan is built on the federal activity guidelines and designed for real people with real jobs. Show up, check the box, and let eight weeks do the work.

— The Auto Advocate Team

Getting in shape doesn't take a gym membership, expensive gear, or a drill sergeant. It takes a plan you can actually follow and the discipline to keep showing up. This 8-week starter plan builds you up gradually from brisk walking to steady jogging, adds a simple at-home strength routine, and gives you a log to track every session.

BEFORE YOU START

Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise or eating plan, especially if you have heart, lung, joint, or blood-sugar concerns, are pregnant, take medication, or haven't been active in a while. Federal guidelines advise people with chronic conditions or symptoms to be under the care of a health-care provider.

1 What the Guidelines Actually Say

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publishes the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. For adults, the core recommendations are:

150–300 min

MODERATE AEROBIC ACTIVITY PER WEEK

75 min

VIGOROUS ACTIVITY PER WEEK (OR A MIX OF BOTH)

2+ days

MUSCLE-STRENGTHENING PER WEEK, ALL MAJOR MUSCLE GROUPS

The very first guideline is simple: **move more and sit less**. The guidelines also say **any amount of physical activity has some health benefits**, and short bouts throughout the day count. You don't have to hit 150 minutes in week one. That's what this plan is for.

Benefits can start right away. HHS notes that activity can reduce anxiety and blood pressure and improve sleep quality and insulin sensitivity.

THE TALK TEST (CDC)

Moderate intensity: you can talk, but not sing. Think brisk walking at 2.5 mph or faster.

Vigorous intensity: you can't say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Think jogging or running.

Under the guidelines, one minute of vigorous activity counts about the same as two minutes of moderate activity.

2 The 8-Week Walk-to-Jog Plan

Do the cardio sessions on non-consecutive days when you can. Every session starts with a 5-minute easy walk to warm up and ends with a 5-minute easy walk to cool down (included in the times below). If a week feels too hard, repeat it. There's no prize for rushing.

WEEK	SESSIONS	EACH SESSION	WEEKLY GOAL
1	3	20 minutes of brisk walking	60 min
2	4	25 minutes of brisk walking	100 min
3	4	30 minutes of brisk walking	120 min
4	5	30 minutes of brisk walking. You've hit the 150-minute mark.	150 min
5	4	Warm up, then repeat 6 times: jog 1 min, walk 2 min. Cool down.	4 sessions
6	4	Warm up, then repeat 5 times: jog 2 min, walk 2 min. Cool down.	4 sessions
7	4	Warm up, then repeat 4 times: jog 3 min, walk 1.5 min. Cool down.	4 sessions
8	4	Warm up, then jog 8 min, walk 2 min, jog 8 min. Cool down. Or keep walking briskly. Both count.	4 sessions

Jogging pace should be easy: if you can't say a short sentence, slow down. Walking briskly is always a good option. Joints and knees matter more than speed.

3 The At-Home Bodyweight Strength Routine

Do this routine **2 days a week** on non-consecutive days (for example, Tuesday and Friday). It works the major muscle groups the CDC lists: legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms. Start with 1 round. Build to 2–3 rounds by week 8. Rest about a minute between exercises.

EXERCISE	HOW TO DO IT	START	BUILD TO
Chair squat	Sit back to lightly touch a sturdy chair, then stand up tall.	8 reps	12–15
Wall or counter push-up	Hands on a wall or counter, body straight, lower your chest, push back.	8 reps	12–15
Glute bridge	Lie on your back, knees bent, squeeze and lift your hips, lower slowly.	8 reps	12–15
Backpack row	Hinge forward with a loaded backpack, pull it toward your ribs, lower slowly.	8 each side	12 each
Step-up	Step onto a low, sturdy step with one foot, stand tall, step down. Use a rail.	6 each leg	10 each
Plank (knees or toes)	Forearms down, body in a straight line, breathe normally.	15 sec	45 sec
Bird dog	On hands and knees, reach one arm and the opposite leg out, hold, switch.	6 each side	10 each

MAKE IT STICK

Schedule your sessions on your calendar like appointments, lay out your shoes the night before, and find a partner if you can. For a full morning system, pair this plan with **Life & Leadership No. L07, Daily Motivation & Morning Routine Planner**, and fuel it with **No. L09, Healthy Eating Made Simple**.

4 Safety Notes

THE FEDERAL GUIDELINES FOR SAFE ACTIVITY

- ☐ Understand the risks, and know that activity is safe for almost everyone
- ☐ Choose activities that fit your current fitness level and goals
- ☐ Increase activity gradually over time
- ☐ Use appropriate gear and look for safe places to be active
- ☐ Be under a health-care provider's care if you have chronic conditions or symptoms

PRACTICAL HABITS

- ☐ Wear supportive shoes that fit well
- ☐ Drink water before, during, and after, especially in heat
- ☐ Walk or jog in daylight or well-lit areas; wear reflective gear at night
- ☐ Normal muscle soreness fades in a day or two. Sharp or joint pain means stop and rest
- ☐ On hot days, go early morning or evening

STOP AND CALL 911

If you feel chest discomfort, pressure, or pain; pain spreading to your arm, back, neck, or jaw; shortness of breath; a cold sweat; nausea; or lightheadedness, stop immediately and call 911. The American Heart Association lists these as possible heart attack warning signs. Don't wait to see if it passes.

5 Your 8-Week Log

Write your minutes in each day's box (C = cardio, S = strength). Total your week, circle your energy level, and keep going.

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOTAL MIN	STRENGTH DAYS
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									

WEEKLY CHECK-IN

WEEK	ENERGY	SLEEP QUALITY	WHAT WENT WELL / WHAT TO ADJUST
1	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
6	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
7	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
8	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	

STARTING POINT (DAY 1)

Date _____

Minutes I can walk briskly _____

Chair squats in a row _____

Plank hold (seconds) _____

FINISH LINE (WEEK 8)

Date _____

Minutes I can jog or walk _____

Chair squats in a row _____

Plank hold (seconds) _____

6 After Week 8: What's Next

Finishing this plan puts you in the habit of regular activity. Here's how to keep building, gradually, the way the guidelines recommend.

Build your aerobic base

Work toward the upper end of the guidelines, up to 300 minutes of moderate activity a week (or a mix with vigorous).

Progress your strength

Add rounds, slow the lowering phase, or add light dumbbells or resistance bands. Keep working all major muscle groups at least 2 days a week.

Keep it fun

Mix in biking, swimming, hiking, a team sport, or a fun run. The best workout is the one you'll actually keep doing.

My next 8-week goal _____

How I'll reward myself for finishing _____

DISCIPLINE PAYS OFF EVERYWHERE**You trained for eight weeks. Don't wing the biggest purchase of the year.**

Getting in shape is about following a proven plan instead of guessing. Buying a vehicle is the same. With the Buyer Brief, we research the rebates, incentives, and incentivized rates on the vehicle you want and value your trade with dealer-grade bookouts, so you walk in with a plan and the numbers to back it up.

Buyer Brief \$99**(405) 761-3390 • autoadvocacy.net****THE DEALERSHIP HAS EXPERTS. NOW YOU DO, TOO.****SOURCES**U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services (ODPHP), Top 10 Things to Know About the Second Edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans: odphp.health.govU.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd ed., Key Guidelines for Safe Physical Activity: health.gov/paguidelinesCenters for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults: cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/guidelines/adults.htmlCDC, Measuring Physical Activity Intensity (Talk Test): cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/measuringAmerican Heart Association, Warning Signs of a Heart Attack: heart.org

This plan is general public-health education, not medical advice. Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise or eating plan, especially if you have a health condition, are pregnant, take medication, or have been inactive. Stop exercising and seek medical help if you feel unwell.