

Starting an exercise program doesn't have to be expensive. Here are some low cost and no cost options for a great fitness routine.

Walk, run, hike – A fitness routine should include some type of cardio workout. You can walk or run for the cost of a pair of shoes. Here in central Arkansas we have several great athletic stores with sales staff that can assist customers with finding a properly fitting running shoe. Enjoy Arkansas beautiful outdoors by walking or running on the local trails. OR – get your heart rate up at home with intervals of jumping jacks, high knees, jump squats, etc. Beginning runners and walkers should ease into the sport. Training schedules for beginners are available online. The free Women Can Run Clinics train beginning walkers and runners for a 5K.

Body weight, stretch bands, free weights – Strength training is another important component of a good fitness routine. Body weight exercise cost nothing are can be very effective – push-ups, crunches, side planks, dips. Buy a set of free weights for bicep curls, squats and lunges. Stretch bands add resistance to work most muscle groups and they are easy to pack so a business trip or vacation doesn't derail your exercise routine.

Yoga, stretching, balance – Flexibility is a third component of regular exercise and one of the easiest to incorporate into a regular daily schedule. Use smartphone apps, websites, youtube videos etc. to find exercises that develop flexibility and balance. No equipment required unless you want to buy a yoga matt available at most athletic and discount department stores.

Low cost or no cost classes – Extension Get Fit is in almost every county throughout the state and costs \$12 per year for twice weekly classes. Find free handouts and posters of exercises from Extension Get Fit on our website at www.uaex.edu. Check with local libraries and community centers for other options. Check the Women Run Arkansas website for beginning runners/walkers clinics. The clinics usually start around the first of March and end with a 5K event in May.

Learn and use proper form to prevent injury and to get the greatest benefit from each movement. Always check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

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