ACSMS Strategic Health Initiative (SHI) on Aging Presents:

Five Causes of Inactivity

See your doctor and exercise professional to help you get started on your exercise program. You can begin to overcome these causes of unnecessary decline!

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ACSM’s Strategic Health Initiative (SHI) on Aging Presents:

Five Causes of Inactivity

1) Avoiding discomfort (e.g., muscle and joint aches)
   - **Problem:** discomfort when exercising can lead to avoidance of activity; avoidance of activity causes a decline in fitness and more discomfort
   - **Solution:** exercise takes effort and may involve some discomfort but is tolerable; discomfort will be reduced over time and benefits will come quickly; most new exercisers report improvement in joint pain within weeks

2) Convenience or Modernization (e.g., cars, elevators, TV/online shopping, and restaurants)
   - **Problem:** deprive us of the normal level of activity our ancestors experienced; minimize effort and caloric expenditure for required daily activities

3) Sedentary recreation (e.g., watching TV/movies, or surfing the net)
   - **Problem:** cheats you of the fun and joy found in active pastimes; invites deconditioning and obesity
   - **Solution:** enjoy long walks, bike rides, or playing active games; fights deconditioning and increases caloric expenditure

4) Disease (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease)
   - **Problem:** avoidance of exercise because of fear of making condition worse; believing that medications interfere with exercise
   - **Solution:** exercise is a key to managing symptoms of these diseases; exercise can help minimize the long-term impact of these conditions

5) Injury (e.g., strained muscles)
   - **Problem:** weeks or months of inactivity cause loss of strength and flexibility, which makes exercise difficult; injury becomes a long-term excuse to avoid activity
   - **Solution:** rehabilitate and then resume an active lifestyle; schedule regular exercise for injured area and whole body

Symptoms of Inactivity-Related Loss of Function:

- difficulty walking up stairs or performing simple tasks (e.g., lifting a gallon of milk)
- muscle aches, strains, and sprains occurring more frequently