

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!

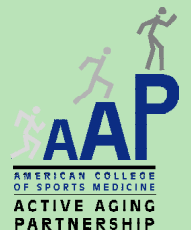
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ACSM's Strategic Health Initiative  
(SHI) on Aging Presents:

# Five Causes of Inactivity



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## 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

- **Solution:** walk short trips, take stairs, shop at stores, and cook meals; increase caloric output doing the little things

## 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