

The Tender Bender

✓ Your Goal: Set Limits

- Get directions from your health care provider about what you can and cannot do. Ask about the types of exercises and stretches you can safely do and whether you need to take precautions, such as:
 - ▶ Avoiding activities that require twisting or jumping
 - ▶ Not exercising in the heat or humidity
 - ▶ Using ice on achy joints before and after workouts
 - ▶ Taking arthritis medications on the days you exercise
- Know that you should stop exercising and get help if you feel dizzy, are short of breath, or have chest pains.
- Ask your doctor whether you need a cardiac stress test before you start a new activity.

✓ Your Goal: Make Activity Time Short and Sweet

- Start small, adding whatever activities you're able to do and then build from there:
 - ▶ Walk to mail a letter.
 - ▶ Take your dog for a walk.
 - ▶ Walk around a shopping mall.
 - ▶ Walk to your neighbor's house instead of driving.
 - ▶ Park your car farther away.
- Consider wearing a step counter (pedometer) daily:
 - ▶ Purchase a pedometer that counts steps, not miles.
 - ▶ Follow the manufacturer's directions for proper wear and calibration.
 - ▶ Attach the pedometer in the morning and remove it just before going to bed.
- Record the number of steps you take each day and your daily minutes of activity in an activity log. This will help you track progress and set new goals.
- Bring your completed logs to future appointments.

Safe Walking Tips

- Plan to walk at a time of day when you feel the most energetic.
- Wear a good-fitting pair of athletic shoes.
- Take routes that are safe, with sidewalks, good lighting, etc.
- Walk with a friend whenever possible.
- Feel free to divide each day's walking goal into multiple short sessions.
- Begin your walk at a slow pace, increase the pace as you go, then taper off at the end.
- End by stretching your warm muscles.
- If you take medications for arthritis, asthma, or diabetes, learn the best times to take them so you can get the most out of your walking.
- Stop if you feel pain, dizziness, or discomfort.
- Talk to your health care provider if you have any concerns.

✓ **Your Goal: Adapt Your Program**

- Try alternative activities that relax and challenge your body in new ways:
 - ▶ Yoga
 - ▶ Tai chi
 - ▶ Pilates
 - ▶ Aquasize
 - ▶ Fit ball class
- Look for classes in your community. They may be available at gyms, local parks and pools, and other community centers.
- Look for alternative exercise video/DVDs that interest you. You may find videos and DVDs by searching “Alternative Exercise DVD” in an online search engine.
- Pay attention to, and write down, all of the positive gains of being more active (in addition to weight loss). For example, you may have more energy, less stiffness, an improved mood, and better sleep.

✓ **Your Goal: Seek Expert Advice**

- Talk to an expert about ways to keep advancing your exercise program.
- Explore your options, such as:
 - ▶ Hiring a personal trainer
 - ▶ Joining a medically based fitness program
 - ▶ Finding a hospital wellness center that has classes
 - ▶ Getting an order from your health care provider for physical therapy or cardiac rehabilitation where you can be instructed and monitored

Tips for Choosing a Personal Trainer

- Look for a personal trainer certified by a nationally recognized certification organization.
- Check the trainer’s references to see whether past clients were satisfied.
- Ask whether the trainer carries professional liability insurance.
- Ask the trainer about how long he or she has practiced and the types of clients seen. Look for a trainer with experience in cases similar to yours. A trainer should ask about your medical history and make sure you have a release from your doctor.
- Ask about fees, scheduling, and where the trainer sees clients.
- Decide whether you feel comfortable with this trainer.