The Smart Student’s Guide to Healthy Living: How to Survive Stress, Late Nights & the College Cafeteria by M.J. and Fred Smith {2006, New Harbinger Publications, Inc.}, is a book with advice for new college students on how they can excel academically and creatively while staying healthy and fit during their first year at school.

In Chapter Four, “Keeping Fit No Matter How Busy You Get,” (the chapter we have printed for you), the authors address the struggles, benefits and strategies to fit regular exercise into a busy college schedule.
Here comes a chapter you might not want to read. It would be nice if you could control your weight and stay fit with the food lists in chapter 1 and the awesome recipes in chapter 2. But there is more to this fitness program than eating right. You're probably saying to yourself, "Keeping fit? No problem. I managed to stay in shape in high school, and I was always rushed. Why should college be any different?"

Well, because it is. Even if you're eating all the right foods from the A list, exercise needs to be part of your college life. But it isn't easy. Amanda, a freshman going to a private liberal arts college where she is majoring in nursing, said, "Thankfully, I walk a lot back and forth to classes, because I don't have time to exercise. My friends will say, 'You wanna walk?' But by the time I'm all done with my work, it's dark."

And, according to a published study (Chakravarthy, Joyner, and Booth 2002), Amanda's exercise pattern is normal:
Frank, a communications and political science double major: I put on nearly twenty pounds in the first semester alone! Without regular exercise or seasonal sports to keep me active, it became extremely easy for me to say, "I'll work out tomorrow." Before long I'd run out of tomorrows, as well as clothes that fit.

- Nearly half of young people aged twelve to twenty-one are not vigorously active on a regular basis.
- Physical activity declines dramatically with age during adolescence.
- Female adolescents are much less physically active than male adolescents.

Reasons Students Struggle to Keep Fit

Every one of the students we surveyed said they struggled with weight gain during their freshman year. Some of these students were extremely active, in the "busy" sense of active. They were on the go, running from class to work to meetings, just as they were in high school. Others were football players, tennis stars, and swimmers on hardworking teams, practicing every day.

It is a common struggle to keep a college waistline from expanding. There are many reasons why. Here are some of the common ones uncovered in our interviews.

THIS ISN'T HIGH SCHOOL

Let's face it: you probably hated climbing the rope or running the mile in
high school gym class, but it kept you in shape. If nothing else, it usually meant that you were getting outdoors and moving your body for a sufficient period of time. Many high school students participate in team sports during high school. Whether that sport is football or dance, it gives you the opportunity to be physical. When you start college, you may lose that regular workout. You aren't having basketball practice every day. That PE teacher is not there yelling to get moving. For many students, this loss of activity creeps up on them before they realize it. One day you realize you've been putting on the pounds. A big part of the reason is because you've settled into a routine without regular exercise.

NOT ENOUGH TIME

You don't need to train for the Olympics to feel fit, but time is not on your side in college. You are going to feel busier than you were in high school, but everyone has at least a half hour to spare on most days. Thirty minutes of brisk activity five days a week is widely recommended by health care professionals. Every student that we surveyed had this much time. As you plan your class schedule, consider a personal fitness class. This is just one way to build physical activity into your college life. But, there is another problem...

LOW MOTIVATION

As your mother might say, "laziness." In this new world of college, you will be working very hard to keep up with your Politics of War and Peace class, physics lab assignments, and math study groups. You might be participating in a choir or in student government. When you get back to your dorm room after a busy day, you are going to want to
put your feet up, turn on the TV and relax, whether the day was really challenging or downright easy. That’s okay. But the habit you want to work toward is to combine at least thirty minutes of physical activity with a TV break.

Our visits with students revealed that most struggled to keep fit because of these two reasons: time and motivation. These are factors that will continue to complicate your exercise habits through college and into adult life. In this chapter, you will hear from two experts who are going to help convince you, once and for all, of the powerful benefits of exercise. First, a physical therapist will explain the science of aerobic exercise. Later, a scientist from Yale University Hospital will explain the research behind the super six-minute workout. The freshman fifteen doesn’t have to refer to weight gain, and this chapter will prove it by offering you fifteen creative, inexpensive, and fun ways to keep active. For now, let’s discuss why it is so important to your college success for you to be active.

Ten Benefits of Physical Activity

To understand the benefits of physical activity during your late teens and early twenties, read what Carolyn Hoffmann, a licensed physical therapist, has to say. Hoffmann has a BS in physical therapy and has been helping people find ways to keep fit for nearly twenty-seven years. She has faithfully exercised since her days at Washington University in St. Louis. Carolyn is also the mother of a college junior and a college-bound high school junior. She identified the ten benefits of physical activity that students know and care about most (Hoffman 2004).

1. Improves self-esteem. You just feel taller and stronger walking out of the gym after a workout. Physical fitness is a value of our culture and translates into improved self-esteem.
2. **Assists in weight control.** Physical exercise helps you maintain a healthy weight. Don’t equate an aerobic exercise class with pounds dropped on a scale, because many people gain weight as they turn flab into muscle. Rather, exercise is a way to manage your weight over the long term, because muscle cells continually twitch and burn more calories in comparison to fat cells. Exercise is more like an insurance policy to guard against weight gain in college.

3. **Sharpen**s you**r** mind and assists in staying on task. The increased blood flow from exercise helps keep your brain infused with oxygen so your mind stays sharp in the classroom. The enhanced feeling of alertness helps you become more productive overall.

4. **Improves flexibility, strength, and endurance.** After a half hour of brisk walking, you aren’t thinking about flexibility, strength, and endurance, but these benefits are just as important as building muscles. With lifelong use of all your muscles, you may avoid many degenerative conditions, like joint pain, later in life.

5. **Reenergizes a person.** Exercise keeps your insulin regulated, helping you to avoid hyper highs and jittery lows.

6. **Produces endorphins.** On the science side of things, exercise creates many good feelings. Exercise will produce endorphins, which make you feel upbeat. Endorphins also decrease whatever pain your body may be feeling, much like a natural ibuprofen.

7. **Improves calm and reduces anxiety.** Moving your arms and legs in a game of flag football or on the elliptical machine at the gym helps reduce stress because you have your mind on something else, and it gives you a break from the issue or environment that is your stressor.
8. Promotes good sleep. Exercise produces what some people call “that good feeling of being tired.” After exercise, your muscles crave rest, and you won’t be tossing and turning all night.

9. Decreases fatigue. Exercise, combined with proper stretching, decreases the amount of lactic acid in your body. Lactic acid contributes to fatigue and muscle soreness. Stretching can help you break down lactic acid and reduce the feelings of fatigue and soreness. Consequently, you will feel better, longer.

10. Prevents disease and illness. Exercise can help you stay disease free by “working out” the bugs that infest your body. During cold and flu season, a regular game of volleyball can help keep you strong to fight off disease organisms in your dorm.

Walking—A Good Start

As mentioned before, beginning an exercise program does not immediately translate into pounds lost on a scale. Rather, your new habit of being active will likely show up first as a feeling of well-being. The weight loss will follow.

And you don’t have to run a marathon the first week to achieve this weight loss. Rather, to lose weight, you can start slow and easy; then, you continually build up your distance, resistance, and pace. For example, you can get out of your dorm right now and walk—just ten minutes—even if you aren’t used to it. Tomorrow, you can walk ten minutes but take the hilly route. You’ll be increasing your resistance. Think about investing in a pedometer to keep track of your steps. This small device keeps track of your distance throughout the day and costs only about ten to fifteen dollars. It might actually be fun to build extra steps into your walks and your daily routine around the dorm. As you
keep taking walks, build up the duration to fifteen minutes, then twenty, and quicken the pace. Do it gradually—but don't quit moving. Walking is great for weight loss because it burns calories, it's easy, and it is by far the least expensive activity you can do.

America On the Move is a national initiative to encourage walking. It was started by Dr. James Hill of Denver, Colorado, in 2004. A deceptively simple strategy, the idea is to wear a pedometer and take more steps today than you did the day before, with the goal of increasing your movement by two thousand steps, or about one mile. This is the equivalent of 100 calories, or one pound lost per month. With chapters in twenty states, you may want to register as a member at www.americasonthemove.org.

Counting steps instead of miles can also boost your workout. Researchers in England asked twelve women to climb a two-hundred-step staircase, progressing from once a day to six times a day (Boreham et al. 2005). Each ascent took about two minutes, so by the end of this study, the women were exercising twelve minutes each. In less than two months, they saw a boost in their fitness level, along with improvements in their

Aaron, who is undecided about his major: It took me a couple days to get out of my laziness and make it down to the gym. Once I did, it made me feel like I had accomplished something. This one-hour-a-day exercise plan has helped me feel more active so far. It really helped me get out of the lazy feeling that I had when I wasn't working out. I have discovered that I need to keep working out because it is very easy to lose motivation if you skip a day. I have been mixing it up with playing soccer and some basketball.
cholesterol level. This study shows that even short bouts of exercise can have a tremendous benefit.

You may hear many different terms to describe variations of walking, like *power walking* and *race walking*. In all cases, posture is very important to avoid back discomfort. When walking, the spine should be stretched upward in a straight yet relaxed position. To avoid swayback, it also helps to hold your stomach muscles in, and, at the same time, tuck your buttocks under your body. Relax your shoulders and allow your arms to swing freely. Bend your arms at the elbows to burn 5 to 10 percent more calories while walking (Spilner 2001).

**TWICE THE BURN**

To take your walking to the next level, consider hill or stair walking. Trekking up and down hills, a 150-pound student burns 400 calories per hour. Walking the stairs can burn up to 600 calories per hour (Spilner 2001).

**CHOOSING WALKING SHOES**

Having given some thought to your form, now all you need is a comfortable pair of shoes! Comfortable shoes will help protect you from developing painful foot conditions. Walkers should consider the following when purchasing a pair of athletic shoes:

**Fit.** Size both feet and fit to the larger one. Allow one thumb width between your longest toe and the end of the shoe. Look for a low, supportive heel that has a rounded shape at the bottom, rather than being flared out. A thick heel or one that flares out will cause your foot to slap down rather than roll. This may contribute to sore shins. Be sure the sole is flexible. You should be able to twist and bend the toe area.
Support. Choose a shoe that matches your arch. The shoe should be lightweight and made of breathable material.

Cushioning. Coming mainly from the midsole, cushioning disperses force as the foot contacts the ground.

RESISTANCE & PACE

To add resistance to your walking workout, consider wearing a weighted vest. We prefer a vest instead of wrist or ankle weights to avoid undue stress on particular joints. To add variety to your walking routine, try skipping, high stepping, walking backward, or hopping. All of these variations use leg muscles in different ways. Soon you will be in the routine of walking briskly for exercise, and you will miss it when there's a rainstorm or you don't have time. What's the next step after walking? You need not run a marathon, but why not challenge yourself to a simple running program, like twenty to thirty minutes daily? Walking is a good start, especially for students who carry extra weight. But if you can run, run. One way to start is to jog at intervals during your walk. The faster your pace, the more likely you are to achieve aerobic benefits.

Aerobic Exercise Boosts Your Energy Level

Running is an example of an activity that provides a cardiovascular or aerobic workout, because it elevates your heart rate. To achieve aerobic benefits, you must elevate your heart rate by twenty beats per minute over your baseline or resting rate (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion 1999). Aerobic activities
get your heart pumping and build up endorphins, which you may recall are the “natural happy chemicals.”

Aerobic exercise includes very brisk walking and running, as well as basketball, bicycling, aerobic dancing, tennis, rope jumping, soccer, and swimming. Aerobic exercises can be used to boost your energy level at the time you need it most. If you have class late in the morning, you might want to do your exercise first thing in the morning. Place your exercise clothes and shoes right next to the alarm clock or radio. That will be your reminder to get going. Or if you intend to exercise right after class is over in the afternoon, place your clothes on the desk chair. It will be a visible reminder when you walk back into the room.

To get started right now, set aside one hour a day for your choice of aerobic activity. This can be a group activity, like soccer, or your own version of jog-walking. Use the first fifteen minutes to stretch and warm up. Then go at it—at full pace—for a half hour. Use the last fifteen minutes to cool down.

**Building Strength**

We know you will feel better both instantly and over the long term by getting off your duff and elevating your heart rate. But what if you want to build strength? Experts agree that to build strength, you need to work all your muscle groups; not just your arms, legs, and chest. Too many people go into the weight room and try to do as many bench presses as they can. You need to work all of the muscle groups in your body, or you will compromise balance and coordination. Working to build strength along with a core strength/stretching program like yoga or Pilates is the best approach. Again, if you do only heavy lifting in order to build muscle, you could experience a weight gain. This
bothers some people who are lifting in order to lose weight, but since muscle weighs more than fat, muscle weight gain is difficult to avoid.

Begin slowly by selecting a lower weight that you can lift with a little resistance, and work on repetition. This might be ten pounds on the upper arm machine or twenty pounds on the overhead pull.

A SIMPLE SIX-WEEK STRENGTH-BUILDING PROGRAM

Here is an example of a starter program for three days a week. Commit yourself to this for six weeks. You should arrive at your workouts feeling strong and refreshed. If not, you may be overtraining. Keep in mind, you need to have rest days between bodybuilding workouts. Since your body grows during rest days, not training days, you need to give it enough time to recover.

**Day one:** Chest (bench press with bar or dumbbell press, flyes, push-ups); triceps (bench dips, kickbacks)

**Day two:** Back (bent-over rows); biceps (curls, standing or seated)

Brandon, a music major from Minnesota: It is hard to find time each day to exercise. I have been able to exercise more than usual, which is great, because when I do get the chance, I feel better about myself. I have more motivation to go again and I sleep better.

Darius, who is studying political science: I feel I am better able to deal with stress when I am exercising every day. Whether it is playing basketball, soccer, walking, jogging, or running, I really feel better about myself. Even if I struggle with my diet, I feel I can overcome it with the amount of exercise I do every day.
Brad, a student from Illinois, who works two jobs: After starting the one-hour-a-day fitness program, I really don’t have any problems or concerns with it. This is very double. Anyone who says they cannot commit an hour to exercising has a schedule that needs to be changed. Setting aside one hour is nothing and the benefits are absolutely awesome. Exercising is fun and makes me feel so good. After finishing up a game, my body may feel exhausted, but it is a good feeling. This really should be implemented into everyone’s life.

Day three: Shoulders (lateral raises, front raises), legs (squats, lunges)

For each exercise, do ten to twelve repetitions and one to three sets. You will need to start by selecting a weight you can lift ten to twelve times with consistency. When you can easily lift the weight twelve times, increase the weight. You can also use this variation:

Day one: Chest (bench press with bar or dumbbell press, flyes, push-ups); back (bent-over rows, pull-downs)

Day two: Biceps (curls, standing or seated); triceps (bench dips, kickbacks)

Day three: Shoulders (lateral raises, front raises); legs (squats, lunges)

You will notice results from this six-week program in just a week. In one month, you will feel and look stronger. At the end of six weeks, evaluate your progress and celebrate. Then decide if you want to maintain your fitness level or increase it by increasing your time, repetitions, or weights. In general, the more weight you press, the bigger your muscles. The more repetitions you do (at lower weights), the more toned your muscles.
How About Swimming?

Some people just don't want to pump iron. An alternative for both cardiovascular health and strength building is a progressive swimming program. Why is water exercise so popular and beneficial? Water offers more resistance to movement than air does. When you push against the water with low force, you receive low resistance from the water. As you build up your strength and push with higher force against the water, you encounter higher resistance. For this reason, water exercise is very efficient. It is also the treatment of choice for injured athletes. Swimming does not have to be monotonous either. If you become bored with the crawl, switch to breaststroke or sidestroke. Here's an example of a progressive swimming program:

**Week One**
- Day one: Swim six minutes, any stroke with easy effort
- Day two: Swim eight minutes, any stroke with easy effort
- Day three: Swim ten minutes, any stroke with easy effort

**Week Two**
- All three days: Swim ten minutes, any stroke with easy effort.
  Rest two minutes. Swim four minutes, any stroke with easy effort.

**Week Three**
- All three days: Add two minutes to your second swim for a total of six minutes.

**Week Four**
- All three days: Add two more minutes to your second swim for a total of eight minutes.
Week Five

All three days: Add two more minutes to your second swim for a total of ten minutes.

Week Six

All three days: Rest after the second ten-minute swim, then swim for two more minutes.

Weeks Seven and On

All three days: Keep adding two more minutes to your third swimming session, building up to ten minutes (or thirty minutes total) with short rests between the three ten-minute sets.

Water exercise can be addictive. Go online to find out when your campus pool is scheduled for open lap swimming. Rummage in that bottom drawer for your suit or trunks and get started. Don’t forget to locate the clock before you dive in. Starting out with six minutes of movement is your victory for day one.

The Six-Minute Workout

Don’t have twenty minutes for an aerobic dance tape? Studies at Yale University’s School of Medicine are measuring the effectiveness of a simple six-minute workout. Geoff Twohill, an expert in occupational therapy at Yale-New Haven Hospital, says the idea is based on combining the effects of both aerobic and anaerobic activities:

Aerobic exercise is longer-duration exercise, targeting slow-twitch muscle groups. It also requires oxygen to burn fat. Walking and jogging are examples.

Anaerobic exercise is of shorter duration and features resistance. It targets fast-twitch muscle groups and requires little
oxygen to burn calories. As anaerobic activity switches to aerobic activity during intense but prolonged muscular work (as in a six-minute bout), oxygen enters muscle cells and promotes the burning of fat in addition to carbohydrate. Combining intense work with prolonged duration is the most efficient way to burn the most calories. You already know that burning more calories than you eat equals weight loss, so consider the six-minute-workout part of your dorm room life.

The six-minute-workout is a simple, time-effective workout routine combining the calorie-burning capabilities of aerobic exercise with a focus on trunk musculature and endurance to tap into the benefits of those oxygen-dependent slow-twitch groups. In a nutshell, all of the above means that hard work in short bursts can be as effective as a lot of work over a longer time, if you do it correctly. The program consists of four exercises, each done in three consecutive sets, for a total of six minutes:

- Push-ups: as many as possible for twenty seconds, all of similar quality.

Robin, a student who goes to the gym regularly:
The six-minute-workout gets two thumbs up!

Sean, a student who almost lives in the science lab: The six-minute-workout has been going well. I think the fact that it only takes six minutes and that you can do it in your dorm room makes it an ideal solution for college kids. I have not found it to be too strenuous at all, but I have definitely felt a difference, especially with the sit-ups.
• Rest for ten seconds, then repeat the exercise-resting pattern two more times, for a total of one and a half minutes used.

• Immediately follow this procedure with standing deep knee squats, with the same exercise-resting pattern.

• Follow with stomach crunches, again in the same pattern. Lie flat, with your knees bent. Put your hands behind your head and come up slowly, touching your elbows to your knees. Do as many as you can for twenty seconds, then rest for ten. Repeat crunches and rest two more times for a total of a minute and a half.

• Finish with pull-ups/chin-ups, again in the same pattern. If you are in the dorm, you can use a high bunk bed frame or the top of a door to pull yourself up. Do twenty seconds of pull-ups, ten seconds of rest. Repeat this two more times.

This workout will total an exhausting six minutes! You will have worked all of the core muscles of your body in this time, and taken next to no time out of your day to do it.

Our study's early results with people who have used this routine show significant changes in body fat percentage and strength. The key to this is maintaining the intensity of the workout. Since you will only be working for six minutes, you can't afford to take a longer break than normal, or the workout will lose its effectiveness. The routine is called closed chain, a term that refers to the use of trunk muscles to stabilize the body throughout each exercise. The theory is that you first utilize the anaerobic capabilities of the muscles to initiate an efficient burn of calories, continue to burn fat as your supply of
oxygen is restored during your chosen cooldown routine, such as stretching.

The “fad” here is that it's not time-consuming, and most importantly for the participant, it works.

Tips on Staying Motivated

So far, we've talked about walking, running, weight lifting, swimming, and a quick all-purpose workout. But how do you get started with any of these programs?

As soon as you get to college, go out and introduce yourself to at least three people. The next day, meet one more new person. Within this growing group, find someone who is also physically active or possibly even has the same ideas and goals for fitness as you do. The two of you can establish a plan for keeping healthy and active, whether it's walking together, playing Frisbee, or shooting hoops. Once you establish the plan, stick to it! When you are exercising with someone else, it's okay if a little competitiveness settles in—it will keep you motivated and add to the fun.

On the other hand, if you're more comfortable exercising alone and need motivation, set little goals for yourself. Huge looming goals are difficult because you don’t see progress right away. Many of us are in the instant gratification mind-set. If your goal is to lose weight, don't set some huge number like fifty pounds. Start with a smaller number, like ten pounds. That number equals one size down in blue jeans. Once you achieve that weight goal, celebrate. Take time to feel your success before deciding if you want or need to lose more. It's frustrating, if not impossible, to motivate yourself when your goal seems far away. By having a series of little goals instead of one large one, you give yourself little victories along the way. By starting slowly, you will
avoid disappointment, as well as injury. After all, you can't just walk into the gym and bench-press three hundred pounds—it takes time. And consider consulting a trainer at the college gym or joining a weight-control support group to share ideas for meeting your fitness and weight goals.

Even if you are keeping active with solo activities, it’s a good idea to inform other people, such as friends and family, of your goals. Having other people informed will help keep you honest about meeting your goals and fan your desire to achieve them. For example, if you're trying to lose weight and it’s going to rain all weekend, you're going to have to find an indoor activity that keeps you on track. Telling the people you are closest to about your goals will keep you focused. Moral support makes any task easier.

It comes down to this in the end: You have to want to be an active person for the long haul. You have to want personal fitness enough to get through the first few weeks of discomfort. And you can’t just do it for someone else. Doing something for someone else, whether it is building strength or losing weight, isn’t going to work in the long run. But if it's something you want to do to make yourself feel good, there is nothing stopping you!

Measuring Calories Burned with Exercise

Now that you’ve decided to get moving, you probably want to know exactly what you’re losing. What you generally want to use and lose are stored calories. Calories are stored when you don’t burn up what you ate that day. All activities burn calories. Most foods have calories. Some foods, like a candy bar milk shake, have a lot of calories, while others, such as a bowl of strawberries, don’t have many. That’s one
reason strawberries are on the A list and milk shakes are not. But we are talking about activity here.

To determine the number of calories you are expending from an activity, you first need to learn your body weight in kilograms (kg). You can determine your weight in kilograms by dividing your weight in pounds by 2.2. For example, if you weigh 150 pounds, your weight in kilograms is 68. Once you’ve found your weight in kilograms, multiply it by the metabolic equivant (MET) value in the table on the next page. METs are a measure of how much energy you will expend doing the activity. Once you have the product of your weight in kilograms and the MET value, you multiply this value by the time spent in hours.

Let’s take light biking as an example:

The MET is 6. So 68 kg. times 6 METs equals 408.
Then multiply the product, 408, by the hours of activity.
Let me explain: If you bike at a light pace for 45 minutes, that’s .75 hour.
So you would multiply 408 by .75 to find that you burn 306 calories for this activity.

Is Algebra I coming back to you? Here is another example:

You weigh 180 pounds and you practice yoga on videotape in your dorm for 40 minutes.
Your weight in kilograms is 180 pounds divided by 2.2, or 82. The MET for yoga is 4.
So 81 kg x 4 METs x .66 hours equals 216 calories.
So, you have expended 216 calories in 40 minutes by stretching and bending in your dorm room. Here are some METs for common activities (Ainsworth et al. 1993):
## MET for Common College Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>MET Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biking leisurely</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking lightly, 10-12 mph</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking moderately, 12-14 mph</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking vigorously, 14-16 mph</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking (racing), 16-19 mph</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking (racing), 20+ mph</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circuit resistance training</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance training, light</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance training, vigorous</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretching, yoga</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water aerobics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking, very slow</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking, slow</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking, normal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking, moderate</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking, brisk</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking, uphill</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Running, 12-minute mile       8  
Running, 10-minute mile      10  
Running, 8.5-minute mile     11.5  
Running, 7.5-minute mile     13.5  
Running, 6.5-minute mile     15   
Running, 5.5-minute mile     18   
Running, cross-country       9   
Running, up stairs           15   
Swimming, laps               10   
Skiing                      7    
Calisthenics (push-ups, sit-ups) vigorous  8

These exercises are the most common ways to keep active and fit. But don't rule out horseback riding or Frisbee golf. Because if you don't find some way to stay active, you could very well become a statistic.

Ways to Keep Moving & Have Fun

Yes, the fear of the freshman fifteen is real for any college student. It is more acute for the student who is especially image conscious about his or her body. The lists and tips and recipes you found at the beginning of this book are going to help. At this point, it doesn't hurt to point out that alcohol is a major contributor to weight gain. With seven nutrient-empty calories per gram, beer and wine coolers get deposited directly on the hips and stomach. Let's face it, you also eat a lot of junk late at night while you're woozy from booze. The good news is that you can avoid gaining any weight if you make and stick with a few
Brad, a journalism major, tested strategy number 2: I joined an intramural basketball team, and we play four times a week. I also get together with a couple of friends and play with them. I really enjoy this. First of all, I love basketball, and second, playing on a team with a bunch of your friends is really great. I believe that everyone should set their sights on an hour a day of exercise or play.

decisions about your schedule and lifestyle at the very start of the year. There are smarter things to do with your time and brain cells than getting wasted. Not only will these suggestions be helpful, but most of them are also fun.

1. Take a first-semester physical education class. Most colleges require some type of physical education class to graduate. To get yourself started on a workout routine right away, simply schedule that class in your first semester. Consider ballroom dancing, tennis, swimming, or racquetball. For some courses, you will have to attend every day. Even on light days you will still be moving large muscle groups. Also, by having exercise scheduled into your day, you will establish a daily routine of keeping fit.

2. Participate in intramural sports. Intramural athletics are not only a great way to stay in shape, they're a wonderful way to make friends, especially for first-year students. The best thing about intramurals is that most of the time they are not seriously competitive. This enables everyone to participate. For those who do take winning and losing seriously, there are always a few teams that go all-out for intramurals. But for the vast majority of students, friendly
competition and companionship are more than enough. You don't have to be great at the sport to participate. Fred was quite possibly the worst basketball player in the history of his high school, and he still shot hoops with college friends during freshman year. Fred reports that he and his friends would laugh about their skills (or rather, lack of skills), but it was an experience that burned calories and brought the group closer.

3. Say yes immediately to anything that keeps you moving. Spontaneous activity is sometimes the most enjoyable kind. College life is sedentary by nature. Lots of books, not enough outdoors. You must make moving a ritual and routine. Keep a Frisbee or small football in your bag at all times for those ten minutes between classes when you're bored and don't have anything else to do. You may not sweat, but it's a way to burn calories and speed up your heart rate. Spontaneous activity surprises your body in a good way. Researchers at the Mayo Clinic have studied the impact of everyday movements like pacing, fidgeting, and restlessness on body size. In their study, they found that overweight people sat for 150 minutes more per day on average than those who were lean. This difference translated into 350 fewer calories burned each day. They determined that if the overweight subjects matched the movement of their lean counterparts, they could lose thirty pounds a year (Chakravarthy, Joyner, and Booth 2002). So go ahead. Pace, fidget, or stretch your arms. Just don’t sit still.

4. Take the long road. If you have any bit of extra time, whether it is between classes or jobs, take the longer route to your activities. If you have a class all the way across campus and you have an extra ten minutes, choose the longest distance to your destination. When you're in a building with both stairs and an elevator, take the steps. It sounds like a ridiculous idea, especially when you already feel tired, but it is spontaneous activity to boost your alertness and burn the apple fritter you may have had for breakfast. And seriously consider a pedometer.
Pete, a biology major planning to go to med school, tested strategy number 4: Okay, this has definitely been easy to do. I walk the long way, even when it is below zero outside. I find myself looking for more inconvenient approaches, or what I call the “long cuts” rather than the shortcuts. These long cuts have been the cure for my laziness and tiredness and it seems to wake me up in the morning and make me alert for whatever I have on my to-do list. If I am pressed for time, I will revert to the shortcuts, but even then I refuse to use the elevator to go up or down just three flights of stairs. It has even been a factor in my social life. This past weekend I was invited to a friend’s house off campus. Without even considering the idea of driving, I took out my walking boots. These changes in my routine seem to make my life less lazy and more proactive.

Maybe buy two—one for you and one for your roommate—and keep track of who can take more steps in a week. The Centers for Disease Control actually recommends that people walk ten thousand steps a day, or about five miles. But that is a long way from the current reality. For instance, even in Colorado, the nation’s leanest state, the average person walks fewer than three thousand steps a day (Hill 2003). But figure it this way: if you increase your steps by two thousand a day, you will burn 100 extra calories, which equals one pound of additional weight loss in a month.

5. Find a partner. Find someone with the same activity interests, whether it is lifting weights, running a few miles, or even playing hacky-sack. Once you’ve found that person, make an effort to spend time together. This is not just another way to make friends, it also helps keep both of you accountable. By having a partner who is as dedicated to fitness as you are, you’ll be more likely to go work out—even when you feel like a slug inside.

6. Select an active work-study or job. You’ll most likely be working some sort of job to help pay for college. Try to select a job that will require you to move.
Sitting behind a desk at the information center is a great way to catch up on homework, but it isn’t going to burn fat. The solution? Find a job where movement is required. You can work as a custodian, on the grounds crew, or even as a cafeteria worker pushing trays and dishes around. Some colleges need attendants in the fitness center. These jobs aren’t as easy as sitting behind a desk waiting for a phone to ring, but while you are working, you’ll make friends and burn calories.

7. Select an active date. When thinking about what to do on a date, recommend something original and active. Let’s face it—anyone can plan dinner and a movie. To be creative, think of something off the beaten path. . .literally! Find a trail for hiking or biking, or even take a long walk to a local historical or scenic site. This will serve two purposes: not only will you get to know the community, you will also get moving to burn off the day’s fuel. After all, who doesn’t want to look and feel fit on a date? A walk in the woods or a stroll in the park won’t cost you any money, and that is always a plus. And wouldn’t you rather date someone who is creative, interesting, and fit? This is a win-win situation!

8. Stretch in class. I’m sure anyone reading this book has become stiff, bored, or just plain uncomfortable sitting in a class. When your muscles get too stiff or remain in an uncomfortable position for a long period of time, you start to develop cramps and pain. These will only get worse (particularly in the neck, shoulders, and back) as you get older if you do nothing to address them. Now, putting your feet up on your desk is a great way to stretch out your legs, but it won’t impress the professor. However, you can stretch in a discreet way when your teacher reaches a natural break in the lesson. Here are some quick stretches as recommended by Carolyn Hoffmann, LPT, the physical therapist you met in earlier in chapter 4.
• **Half shrug.** Sit upright. Bring your shoulders straight up to your ears, roll them back and down, then relax. Repeat this slowly. This helps relax your shoulders.

• **Turtle stretch.** Sit upright and move your head straight back while keeping your chin level. Repeat this slowly. This stretches the chin and neck.

• **Lower back.** Place your hand on the small of your back, then arch your back forward and back to ease the pressure from your lower back.

• **Stretch break.** If your professor gives you a stretch break, stand up and take advantage of the opportunity to improve your blood flow. Grab the top of your foot and bring your heel back to touch your hip. Do this with both legs. For your upper body, reach both arms out as far as they will stretch. Then reach toward your left hand with your right hand, like you were going to pull a long-sleeved sweater off.

9. **Dorm room workouts.** On days with no time to make it to the gym or pool, exercise in your dorm room. To work out in your dorm, you will need open floor space and a free wall. It also helps to have an understanding roommate who will appreciate your antics, or even support them by working out with you. With floor space, your roommate's blessing, and a comfortable outfit—you can get started. This workout won't give you arms like Popeye, or legs like a track star, but when practiced daily for a period of three weeks, they will shape and tone your abs, chest, and back. Here is a simple routine for a Dorm Room Workout, as recommended by Carolyn Hoffmann, LPT.

• **Wall push-ups.** Even in a small dorm room with little free wall space, you will be able to stand and face a closed door. Put your arms out and lean in toward the door. With your feet
shoulder-width apart, push yourself back and forth against the door. Repeat this five to ten times.

- **Side bender.** With your arms at your side, bring your right arm up over your head and gently lean toward your left side while also reaching toward the floor with your left hand. Repeat this five to ten times, then switch sides.

- **Calf muscle stretch.** Place one foot ahead of the other. With the back heel flat on the floor, lean in toward the front foot. Repeat this five to ten times with each leg.

- **Traditional crunch.** Lie on your back and bend your knees so your feet rest on the floor. With arms stretched out to the front, lift shoulders off the floor about forty-five degrees. Slowly lower shoulders back to the floor. Repeat five to ten times.

- **Traditional push-up.** Lie face down on the floor. Place hands next to your shoulders, fingers pointing straight ahead. Place feet a few inches apart, toes on floor. Tightening abs, extend elbows to raise body off floor. Keeping head aligned with
spine, lower your body four to eight inches from floor. Repeat five to ten times.

- **Swimming.** Lying face down, extend your arms in front of you and your legs behind you. Keeping arms and legs straight, lift the right arm and left leg off the floor. As they lower down, lift the left arm and right leg so it looks like you are swimming. Repeat five to ten times. This works the often-neglected lower back muscles.

10. **Fad workouts from late-night TV.** The early 1990s cemented the fad workout in our lives. From circuit training to Tae Bo and spinning, we have flocked and bought into the allure. These programs meet our simple need for structure and consistency. Many of these exercise and weight-loss programs are effective, so if you love to follow the popular culture of fitness, go ahead and try the latest late-night TV fad workout. With your roommate's blessing, a VCR or a DVD player, and enough floor space in your dorm room, you can work out on your own schedule.

11. **Study yoga.** Yoga is appealing because the lifestyle is synonymous with relaxation and less stress. People who practice yoga say it is a way to connect to inner energy and release full physical potential. It's pretty easy to get started. Borrow a book or a videotape from the library or join a class on campus. Yoga improves your core muscles, flexibility, coordination, balance, and self-confidence. Here's how:

- **Increased flexibility.** When you practice a variety of yoga positions, your body is stretched in different ways than in other workouts.
- **Increased lubrication of the joints, ligaments, and tendons.** Reaching the top shelf of your closet or carrying laundry up the steps will also be easier with yoga in your schedule.
• **Massaging of all organs in the body.** During a yoga session, your internal organs and glands are stimulated. Yoga is a way to specifically increase blood flow to internal organs, which helps keep your body disease free and provides more sensitive feelings of changes in how your body feels. With the increased blood flow, yoga may be a way to flush out toxins from your system. The ultimate benefit is feeling like you have more energy.

• **Muscle toning.** When a muscle sits dormant for a period of time, it will become weak and flabby. Since yoga is a full-body workout, your weakest muscles will get stronger.

12. **Practice Pilates.** Like Yoga, Pilates is a workout that emphasizes core body movement without weight and relies on your own muscles to build power and flexibility. This method of exercise is widely popular with dancers and skaters. While yoga promotes calmness and flexibility, Pilates is more focused on building strength through motion. Joseph Pilates, who overcame a frail body as a child to eventually become an accomplished skier, gymnast, and boxer, developed this...
method. While yoga is a full-body workout, Pilates works core muscles—the chest, abs, and all the muscles connected to your back. You might say to yourself, "I do crunches every night . . . isn't that enough?" Well, yes and no. Pilates works muscles missed with crunches. With a stronger core, your balance and coordination will improve. These traits will be noticeable even in walking. A good way to describe what Pilates does is that it supports your body in the same way that a tree supports its branches. A tree can’t support all its branches if its trunk isn’t strong. In other words, if you work your arms, shoulders, and legs through traditional exercise, you should also give your trunk strength to support them through Pilates. It is especially helpful for anyone who has experienced back pain.

13. **Find a new hobby or rediscover an old one.** Keeping fit is easier if your thoughts of chilling out travel farther than the nearest snack machine. Students we surveyed said they developed new hobbies when they got to college or they even resumed hobbies they had as children. Here are a few examples:

- Scrapbooking
- Beading
- Painting or drawing
- Playing the guitar or piano
- Writing songs
- Composing poetry
- Keeping a diary

All of these hobbies, while sedentary, exercise your mind and keep your hands out of the candy machine.

14. **Keep your room clean.** Let's face it, if you aren't motivated enough to pick up a few dirty socks, how on earth are you going to be
able to motivate yourself to lift weights or take the longer road to class? With clothes all over the floor, books and magazines in every corner, and a bed that hasn’t been made since moving day, you are going to feel disorganized and unmotivated. Keeping your room clean will give you a fresh, organized feeling every time you walk into it, which will give you more energy for the other activities you do. Being active about keeping your room picked up is another way to combat the freshman fifteen.

15. Volunteer on campus. Whether you’re interested in hunger relief, animal rights, or science fiction literature, there is probably a club that is right for you. Such clubs usually include taking on some responsibility, from attending meetings to working at fund-raisers. Staying active and involved with others keeps you from mindless eating, so volunteer and become a responsible member. If you’re really into taking photos, then join the photography club. Or join a group to learn something totally new. It might be a human rights organization or a first amendment advocacy group, but you’ll never fully understand your passions and interests unless you experiment with new experiences and relationships. And while you are thinking about new things, you won’t be eating.

STICK WITH IT

Every journey begins with a first step. By reading this book, you have taken the first step toward improving your fitness and your life. Remember, this is your ride, your body, your life. You are the only one who can make the change. The most difficult period will be the first two days. Then try this: For three weeks, just twenty-one days, accept the fact that you’ll be in uncharted territory. It takes twenty-one days to cement a new habit. Once you have committed yourself to change, you will start to see that exercise is a gift you have given yourself. You do
have control over how you look and feel. It is not just your body that feels stronger. There is something inside of you that gets stronger too.

DOCUMENT YOUR NEW, ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

College years are a time to remember. You're experiencing so many new things that time seems to fly by, and your first year will be gone before you know it. To remember all your great times and the emergence of a new lifestyle, think of a way to record what you've experienced over the year. This can be as easy as writing in a journal, taking photos with all your friends, or creating a scrapbook chock-full of mementos, like concert tickets or a program from an art show. As time goes by, you'll appreciate that you made an effort to remember what you experienced. But, there's an important key to having things to remember—you have to actually go out and try activities so that you actually have things to remember.

Signs of Exercise Abuse

Zealous attitudes about exercise can be taken to dangerous levels, and health professionals now recognize this problem as exercise abuse (Jackson 2005). It may occur along with disordered eating. Be aware of signs like these that suggest a compulsion with physical activity:

- A strong emotional commitment to exercise that disrupts relationships
- A sense of obligation to exercise, evidenced by an inability to take a day off
- Anxiety when exercise is not possible
• A rigid relationship between eating and output—having to exercise after eating
• Lack of enjoyment of the exercise activity
• Exercise during illness or injury
• Exercise at the expense of other responsibilities
• Continuous talking about exercise
• Exercise in secret
• A preoccupation with exercise supplements or products leading to financial hardship

The point is to be aware that even healthy habits can be taken to extremes. Maintaining fitness and preventing weight gain are not impossible goals for your freshman year. They can be achieved through educated decisions about eating and an active lifestyle. But don’t focus on being perfect. Everyone has off days, and you will too. Making good choices as often as you can and aiming for “most of the time” will help you feel better about yourself. So why not start right now?