**Setting Fitness Goals in Retirement**

As your career goals begin to recede during the transition to retirement, you may find yourself setting new goals that will help you live your best life longer. Improving your fitness can help you reach those goals while also filling up some of that new blank space in your weekly calendar.

Whether you're getting serious about exercise for the first time or looking to upgrade your existing routine, these three tips can help to improve your health, your mood, your retirement schedule, and your life.

**1. Be SMART about your goals.**

"I want to be healthier" is not a very good fitness goal. "I want to lose 10 pounds this winter" or "I want to run a half-marathon next year" are much better because they're SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. No one can just "be healthier." But you can track, measure, and manage your weight, what you're eating, and how much exercise you're doing during the week. You can make a bigger goal like that half-marathon more achievable by creating a training schedule that ramps up little by little until you're ready for race day.

**2. Set goals for tomorrow, not yesterday.**

The relevancy piece is often the trickiest part of a SMART goal, especially for retirees. As you're navigating the retirement transition, you may feel stuck between the person you were in your career and the person you are now that you're no longer a doctor, CEO, or teacher. You might also feel pressure from friends, family, and social media to follow the latest fitness fads just because they're popular.

Try to pinpoint fitness goals that will align with your priorities in this new stage of life and make your retirement more enjoyable. Being able to bench press a certain weight or run a certain distance might be less important to you now than improving your mobility so you can chase after your grandkids or volunteer as a youth basketball coach. Maybe taking yoga or tai chi classes would help you reach those goals better than buying a home gym. Or, if you want to devote part of your retirement to improving your performance at a favorite sport or activity, you could start working with a coach. Once you're hitting the fairway more consistently you might feel inspired to set some new travel goals and play some of the world's great courses. And if your spouse or adult children want to travel with you and round out your foursome, all the better!

**3. Make fitness fun.**

You know the old joke about the man who tells his doctor it hurts when he raises his arm above his head.

The doctor's prescription: "Don't do that."

Your real doctor will probably tell you the same thing about any exercise you're really struggling with. The "no pain, no gain" mentality that might have helped you reach fitness goals in your youth will probably result in more pain than gain after age 65. And there's nothing SMART or smart about activity that's making it harder for you to get out of bed in the morning.

Even worse, you probably won't be having any fun. If you're not enjoying your exercise routine, and if your workouts aren't helping you progress towards achievable goals, then you're going to stop doing them.

Once you’ve found a fitness routine that works for you, try to build in a little more enjoyment to help that routine stick. Invite your spouse or a friend along on your morning walks. Treat yourself to a big helping of your favorite dessert when you’ve hit a short-term goal. Take pride in the commitment you’re making to a healthier you and enjoy the journey along the way.

Are you thinking about setting some new retirement fitness goals in 2024? We’d love to hear about them and discuss how our Life-Centered Planning Process can support a happier and healthier you.