

We all know that getting fit and active can make us feel and look much better, not to mention tone our wobbly bits. Zoe Hellman, Head of Dietetics and Health Policy for Weight Watchers, tells us how best to combine activity with the Weight Watchers eating plan to get fit and healthy, and maximise your weight loss results. And Weight Watchers members tell us how they earn their activity *ProPoints* values – and what they do with them.

Why should I make physical activity a regular part of my life?

There are so many benefits to following an activity routine that we advise all members to adopt one as part of their lifestyle.

Being active can reduce high blood pressure and cholesterol, lower your risk of certain diseases and make you feel happier and more energetic. It can also help you sustain your weight loss once you've reached goal. Getting into the habit early and finding an activity you enjoy will make it a lot easier to maintain in the future. Exercise also tones you up, so will help firm muscle as you lose weight.


How do you earn your activity *ProPoints* values?

*Bev says: 'I earn 20 to 25 a week but don't use them, as my daily *ProPoints* allowance of 29, along with my weekly allowance of 49, is enough. I love my pedometer, as it encourages me to do more!'*

How do I earn activity *ProPoints* values?

You earn them every time you are active. This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to be going to the gym every day or doing endless lengths of the swimming pool. Simple, everyday tasks, such as walking your dog or doing a bit of housework or gardening, can also earn you activity *ProPoints* values.

How many activity *ProPoints* values should I be earning?

A good starter goal would be 14 activity *ProPoints* values a week – so an average of just 2 a day. For continued weight loss, you can then aim to earn 2 to 4 activity *ProPoints* values a day. For a person weighing 12st 7lb that's between 20 and 50 minutes of moderate exercise a day. Essentially, if you choose to incorporate exercise into your Weight Watchers plan, it's about working with your body to achieve a steady weight loss. After a few weeks on the plan, you will see what works best for you, as that will be reflected at the scales. 

MAKE 2012 YOUR YEAR FOR GETTING FIT!

Too many of us focus solely on what we eat when we embark on a weight loss plan. But with the dawn of a new year – and an Olympic year at that – now is the time to harness the power of activity to see those scales plummet!

How do you earn your activity ProPoints values?

Jami says: *'I aim to earn about 4 activity ProPoints values a day and I use them for food. My favourite activities are walking, housework, swimming and playing with the kids.'*

What can I use my activity ProPoints values for?

You decide what to do with them. You can swap them for regular ProPoints values (one activity ProPoints value equals one regular ProPoints value) or save them up to boost your weight loss. We've found that people who stick to their eating plan *and* increase physical activity are more successful than those who don't.

Do certain exercises earn you more activity ProPoints values than others?

High intensity work-outs (such as running and cycling) earn you more activity ProPoints values than low intensity work-outs (such as a leisurely stroll). You also earn more activity ProPoints values when you increase the length of time that you are active for.

How do I calculate how many activity ProPoints values I have earned?

You can either use the chart at the back of your Pocket Guide, which you receive in your first meeting, or the Activity Tracker on eSource, the online companion for meetings members. They are worked out using your current weight, how long you have been active for and at what intensity level your work-out was. Heavier people will earn more activity ProPoints values than those who are lighter because it takes more effort to carry their weight around while moving.

Can I save up my activity ProPoints values in the same way as my weekly allowance?

You can use your activity ProPoints values in the same way as your weekly allowance. So if you want to have a treat at the weekend and have exercised all week then it's perfectly fine to use all the activity ProPoints values you have earned in one night. However, you cannot save them up for longer than a week. You must start afresh, even if you have activity ProPoints values left over that you haven't used that week.

Michelle says: *'I earn mine with kick boxing. It's the best exercise ever!'*



Karen says:

'I earn as many as I can each week with my Zumba classes and walking. I do use them at the weekend and, to be honest, if I didn't have them I don't think I would have come so far. Everyone deserves a treat and using my activity ProPoints values means that I can have mine.'

How to choose the right activity for you

It doesn't matter what activity you do, you just have to do one! Read this simple guide and identify which is the sport for you.

Do you love to dance?

Unless you've been living in a cave for the past two years, you'll be well aware of the fitness phenomenon that is Zumba!

Zumba is a Latin-inspired dance fitness programme incorporating hip-hop, samba, salsa, merengue, martial arts, and some Bollywood and belly dance moves. Essentially, the music is loud and anything goes! Zumba appeals to so many people, as it's so accessible. You don't

need to be a great dancer or learn lots of complicated or rigid moves; you're free to interpret the steps however you want, as long as you keep up the intensity. Zumba classes are popping up all over the country, so check out notice boards in your local leisure centre or library, or go to zumba.com. If you're not already, you'll be hooked!

Do you live a stressful life?

Physical activity can help lower stress levels and promote feelings of wellbeing – and for some people taking up a martial art is the ideal 'stress-buster'. Ever thought of trying kick boxing? It's a serious work-out, it's great for toning the entire body (especially the bingo wings) and could be your ideal way for dealing with a stressful day. Just imagine aiming your blows at whatever has

annoyed you that day! Ask at your local leisure centre to find a class near you. Your Weight Watchers meeting is also a great place to hear about local exercise classes and to swap activity tips – so make sure you always stay for the talk.

Are you really pushed for time?

Fitness trends for 2012 are moving towards shorter but more intense work-outs. As our lives get busier and busier, many gyms are introducing 30-minute studio classes instead of the normal hour-long ones. These are certainly not easy options, as they will be high intensity to make up for the shorter time frame. The gym chain Virgin Active is also introducing a 20-minute fast class – perfect for busy people or those who want to squeeze a work-out into their lunch hour. For more information, go to virginactive.co.uk.

Do you love to get out in the fresh air?

Nothing beats exercising in the open air. Anything you choose to do that gets your limbs and heart working will make you feel better, earn you activity **ProPoints** values and burn the calories. Many members love the simple pleasure of walking the dog or even just taking a daily stroll. If you don't have a dog, why not offer to walk a neighbour's dog for them? That way you're doing a good deed and getting fit. Or how about investing in a trampoline for the garden? The kids will love you for it and it will give you a great, fun way to get active.

Do you need to be motivated by a group to get you moving?

Many fitness chains, such as David Lloyd (davidlloyd.co.uk), are now offering group personal training sessions, where you get the guidance and motivation of a personal trainer at a fraction of the cost. Ask your local gym if it offers the service. It may be worth contacting a private personal trainer also and asking whether he or she would consider group sessions.

Joining a sports team, such as netball, football or hockey, or a local running club is also a wonderful way of exercising within a group, keeping your enthusiasm high. Check with your local leisure centre for details of any clubs near you. And don't be

How do you earn your activity **ProPoints** values?

*Katie says: 'I try to go to my Zumba class twice a week. I also walk the kids to school with a pushchair twice a day and go the long way home. I try to earn at least 4 activity **ProPoints** values a day when I can.'*

put off – running clubs and sports teams welcome people of *all* abilities, not just the super-sporty!

Are you too shy to exercise in public?

Many members swear by their Wii Fit to get them active at home. You'll need a Nintendo Wii Console (from £100 upwards) and the Wii Fit game (around £20 for the game, plus around £70 for the balance board) to get started. Search online for the best current bargains or compare prices from the major retailers (Tesco, Argos, Amazon). If you don't want to splash so much cash, why not get to grips with an exercise DVD? There are sure to be some great bargains to be had in the

New Year sales. We recommend celebrity trainer Tracy Anderson's latest one, *The Tracy Anderson Method: Dance Cardio Workout II* (see page 8 for a review).

Is money tight?

If you're looking for the best free way to earn activity **ProPoints** values and lose weight, look no further than running.

It's great for the time-poor too, as you're exercising the minute you leave your front door.

Start slowly, build gradually and you'll soon see and feel the rewards. Many members find the Couch-to-5K running plan a brilliant way to start. Visit coolrunning.com or download the app from the iTunes store. 📱

*Cheryl says: 'I average 4 activity **ProPoints** values a day by exercising with my Wii Fit. I have allergies and am not able to get outside to walk, but I make sure that I get a good work-out indoors. I find that I don't use my activity **ProPoints** values.'*

