

move it!

free or low cost exercise options are plentiful

When tightening your budget belt over the past couple of years, some things just had to go, including your gym membership. While that might have helped your checkbook balance expand, your waist expanded along with it.

Do not despair; there are plenty of free or low cost ways to exercise:

- **Walking.** How many times have we read this, but not really just done it? So follow Nike's advice and just do it. It's free and it's so easy to do. When you feel up to it, you can graduate to running. It's really that easy.

- **DVD rentals at the library.** Make use of that library card for more than just exercising your mind. Most public libraries have a wide selection of DVDs, including fitness DVDs. So why purchase DVDs that you will get bored using after three or four workouts when you can borrow them for free?

- **Exercise channels on TV.** If you have some form of pay television, it is likely that there is a channel dedicated to exercise programming all day long, along with "on demand" programs for a wide variety of workouts that can be done at your convenience.

- **Internet videos.** YouTube and a wide variety of websites offer free workouts. Set up your laptop on the coffee table and get to work with your very own personal instructor!

With all of these options, there's no excuse not to exercise so get to it!



weighty matters

federal government offers free weight loss program options

How are you coming on the New Year's resolution to lose weight? Uh huh...we thought so.

It is not as if you've forgotten that you need to lose weight. Every time we turn on the television, there seems to be a commercial for some weight loss program featuring a newly slender celebrity: Jennifer Hudson represents Weight Watchers®, Marie Osmond represents NutriSystem® and Carrie Fisher – yup, Princess Leia – now represents Jenny Craig®.

So how is an average Jane on a budget supposed to look like a celebrity without the extra cash to join a gym or a diet program?

It's easy. You are already paying for a healthy eating plan every time you send your hard earned tax dollars to Uncle Sam. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides a wealth of nutrition and diet information on its website and it's all there for free.

A great starting point is the booklet, "Dietary Guidelines for Americans." It can be found online at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/default.htm>. It provides guidelines that are easy to read and easy to follow, along with links to other helpful documents, as well.

Another free source of information provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture can be found at www.mypyramid.gov. The food group pyramid is provided and explained in detail.

Yet another free weight loss booklet provided by the federal government is titled, "Weight Loss for Life" and can be found at http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/for_life.htm.