

Keep Your Fitness on Track

Grab a buddy and practice making YOU-turns

“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO for your health today is to walk 30 minutes – and then call a buddy,” says Michael Roizen, MD, Chief Wellness Officer and Chairman of Cleveland Clinic’s Wellness Institute.

That fitness buddy relationship – being a buddy and having a buddy – is vital to keeping your health goals on track. You and your fitness buddy should have supportive, kind and non-judgmental relationship. So, if you’ve gone for your 30-minute walk only to arrive home and eat seven cookies, you can feel confident that your buddy won’t scold you.

“It’s your buddy’s job to find out how you are and how he or she can encourage you to correct your behavior so you can get back on track,” says Dr. Roizen.

The buddy system works like a GPS satellite navigation system in a car, helping to navigate you without judgment. You plug in your destination, and the system plots your current and final points. When you turn onto the wrong street, the GPS doesn’t berate you; doesn’t scold you; doesn’t tell you that you might as well park the car forever.

Instead, it politely says, *“At the next available moment, make an authorized U-turn.”*



The GPS recognizes the mistake and simply guides you back onto the right road.

“It’s your buddy’s job to check your status and encourage you, when needed, to get back on track.”

“That’s the kind of mentality you and your and fitness buddy need,” says Dr. Roizen. You and your buddy are going to make wrong turns. You’re going to turn left at the cookies, make a right at the cheesecake, and occasionally arrive at the intersection of buttermilk pancakes and sausage patties. Does that mean you should park the car and give up on being healthy? Of course not!

“Understand that you get a do-over,” says Dr. Roizen. “If your buddy can encourage you to correct your behavior – and you can do the same for them – then each of you can make a YOU-Turn and stay on a healthy track.”