The benefits of physical activity are rewards in and of themselves: lowered risk for a number of chronic diseases, weight maintenance, even improved mood and mental functioning. But if these rewards were enough to motivate us to get and stay physically active, we would all... well...get and stay physically active!

(Take about 5 minutes or so to discuss with your TOPS chapter why you feel that exercise can still be so difficult to consistently integrate into everyday life, despite the seemingly endless list of benefits.)

Realistically, the health benefits of exercise are not always enough to get us moving, and it may take some time to see results. That’s why it helps to have an extra, more-immediate reward for which to work.

For this program, each member will receive points for the time they spend exercising—one point for every minute spent exercising. Points earned may then be “turned in” for incentives of your choice. Incentives such as a new pair of walking shoes or even just the ever-elusive “me time” will help you celebrate your successes.

“1 Minute Spent Exercising = 1 Point”

Each member will create their own points scale with corresponding rewards for points earned. A sample points scale is:

75 Points Earned = 30 minutes to practice a hobby or relax with a book
150 Points Earned = 60 minutes of un-interrupted “me time” to do something I enjoy
300 Points Earned = New exercise DVD
600 Points Earned = New pair of walking shoes

Go ahead and take pride in your rewards, knowing that you have truly earned them.

Follow-up: Your TOPS chapter is encouraged to hold a follow-up meeting for this program in one month to discuss and evaluate progress. Describe the incentives you set for yourself. Did you “earn” these rewards, or are you well on your way? Did setting these rewards help you to incorporate more physical activity? Do you look at physical activity as more of a reward and less of a punishment?

For more information call 1-800-932-8677
Or visit the TOPS website at www.tops.org