Announcer: The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap: Summer is around the corner, and for many people, getting into summer-ready shape is a priority. While maintaining weight and fitness level all-year-round is the best practice, things get in the way and it can be tough. There are no quick fixes, but do not give up. There is still time to get fit for the summer if you put in the effort. I’m Emily Yeap.

 Joining me today are Joe Arledge, fitness and wellness graduate assistant at Missouri State University's Foster Recreation Center (FRC) and Kayla Howard, FRC personal trainer and BearFit instructor. They are here to share healthy ways to look and feel good this summer.

Arledge believes there are two key things to keep in mind when working out.

Joe Arledge: The biggest thing is, everybody's different. So, it might take eight weeks for me but it might take four weeks for somebody else. Another thing is always be patient because a lot people these days want instant gratification, where they want to be like, "Oh, I want a six-pack next week." But usually that's not possible, unless you do it in an unhealthy manner. So it's definitely important just to be patient, just keep working hard, and keep the dedication.

Emily Yeap: Getting in shape requires both a good diet and exercise.

Kayla Howard: First, focus on water intake. That's really important. Also focusing on healthy fruits and vegetables while they're in season. So, like shopping at a local farmer's market. Then last, to make workouts a little more fun, take them outside in the summer months when the weather is nicer. Find a local high school track or a college track, or a local park to enjoy the beautiful weather and to make your workouts more enjoyable.

Emily Yeap: Working out actively, but eating poorly will not help you get the summer body you want.

Joe Arledge: A lot of people don't realize that nutrition's actually half the battle. If you work out six days a week, but you're eating Big Macs every other day, then obviously you're not going to see as many results as you would like. An alternative to getting fast food every day would just be meal prep. I mean, a lot of people struggle with the time aspect of the whole fitness and wellness thing, but definitely meal prepping on Sunday or Saturday for the entire week. That way you have a healthy dinner, a healthy meal right in front of you, and it only takes a couple minutes to heat up in the microwave if you need it.

Emily Yeap: To enjoy working on your summer body, Howard says it is important to set manageable goals.

Kayla Howard: Rather than setting a goal of losing X amount of weight, focus on the way your body feels, your energy levels, and truly listen to your body. Say your goals could be to exercise or to make it to the gym three or four times a week, rather than an unrealistic goal of six or seven times a week because you're not going to stick to that right off the bat.

 Also, balance is really important. So instead of saying you're going to go on this crazy diet and exercise routine and then crashing and burning, you set realistic small goals and have a balance of fun and fitness.

Emily Yeap: Arledge advises people to know their own limits.

Joe Arledge: You just gotta take some baby steps. I think a lot of people just overdo themselves within that first week, especially like right before Spring Break. They go so extreme, they go so hard that they burn themselves out within a week. Where if you take baby steps, and especially if you've been stagnant for a while, you have to get your body used to exercising again. That way you don't get hurt and the soreness isn't as bad.

Emily Yeap: While looking good is a top reason to exercise, Howard says do not focus on that area alone.

Kayla Howard: As society, too, we put a lot of pressure on how we look and our outward appearance. But when you start exercising for other reasons such as how you feel, and your mood, and your everyday energy levels, I think that's really an incentive to keep with your exercise program, rather than just the exterior.

Emily Yeap: Those looking for extra motivation and guidance to reach their fitness goals should consider working with a personal trainer.

Kayla Howard: I preach mind muscle connection a lot, because a lot of people will go in the gym and simply go through the motions every day. But you don't start seeing real results until you really focus on the body parts you're working, and really why you're doing certain movements. Accountability, too. If you have a time and a place, and you know that your personal trainer's going to be there, and you know that you need to show up, and that's it, you don't have to make your workout, you just have to show up, that's really big for a lot of people as well.

Emily Yeap: Another fun option that offers variety is fitness classes. They include everything from yoga to spin to high-intensity interval training.

Joe Arledge: If you want that group aspect, not necessarily a one-on-one personal training, classes would be the way to go.

Emily Yeap: FRC memberships are available to Missouri State students, employees, active alumni, university affiliates and household members. Get more details at missourstate.edu/reccenter. I'm Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer: For more information, contact the office of University Communications at (417) 836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.