

Staying Fit

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Staying Fit

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Five Ideas for Staying Motivated about Fitness

Have you made the commitment to exercise and started out with all your zest and vitality, only to find that you've come crashing down to the ground really hard? Well, do not feel bad; we have all been there and done that.

The first step to incorporating exercise into your daily routine is the decision, the second step is the action, and the third step is the commitment. However, commitment comes with another component and that is to stay committed and to stay motivated.

There are several ways to conquer the motivation monster and here are the top five:

1. **Change Your Mindset** – Once you have made the decision to exercise, it is important to make the commitment as well. Thinking about it is wonderful, but acting upon it is another story. Change how you view your new-found decision by making it something positive and rewarding rather than just one more dreaded thing you have to accomplish.
2. **Visualize** – Practice visualizing your goal. If your goal is to be healthier, spend some quiet time meditating on wearing flowing white clothing sitting on the beach and being healthy, happy, and whole. If you are heading toward a long-awaited vacation, picture yourself in a beautiful sundress or bathing suit that you have wanted for a very long time.
3. **Get Together with Your Best Pal** – Grab a pal and have a “calendar date.”

Match your calendars to find that time slot where you are both available for 30 to 45 minutes of exercise. You will find that the motivation of another and being accountable to that date and time will open up the time slot needed for exercise and socialization as well.

4. **Make It a Family Affair** – Rather than taking the kids to the park and sitting on a bench watching them play, grab your bicycles and go for a ride. Not only does that make time for exercise, it also makes time for family. When your children are enthusiastic about going on a bike ride with you, that enthusiasm will become contagious and continue to motivate you.

5. **Exercise when You Least Want to** – So many of us are guilty of feeling and thinking too much, especially when you are having a “bad day.” It is at that moment that you should replace your downward spiral with exercise. Not only will it give you the results for your body, it will work wonders for your mind as well. This may be difficult at first. However, when you first accomplish this, you will see many positive results. Your mindset will change and you will have created a new memory to keep you motivated next time you are down in the dumps. You will actually be able to turn something negative into something positive.

When all is said and done, if you keep a short journal about your positive exercise experiences and turn to it during those “I don’t have the time or I don’t feel like it” moments, you will read the results right off the page and get moving.

Five Ways to Find More Time to Exercise

When it comes to exercise, we all have good intentions. First, we make a decision to exercise, next we announce it to the world, and finally, we decide to go all out and purchase new equipment, clothing, or even a gym membership.

Then something happens, or rather does not happen. We cannot seem to find the time or the desire to finish what we wholeheartedly started.

Whenever we incorporate something new into our life, whether it is diet or exercise, we must first realize that it is, in fact, new. We must incorporate a new habit into our lives on a daily basis. And, therein lies the problem. We are so stuck in our patterns that we do not even begin to know how to add something else onto our to-do list.

1. Put It in Writing – Put the word exercise or Zumba or power walk on your calendar in bright red ink. Pick a date and time every week and put it everywhere from a cell phone reminder to an email to yourself. Putting things in writing seems to have a commitment to accomplish that task attached to it.

2. Review and Replace – Rather than trying to cram one more thing into an already hectic schedule, examine that schedule and see what you can delete and replace with your new-found love of exercise. Perhaps an hour of Facebook time or game playing on the computer can be deleted and exercise put in its place. Do these things only on the weekends and free up some time for exercise during the week.

3. Take a Good Look at Your Schedule – Perhaps you could go to bed 30 minutes earlier, three times per week and get up 30 minutes earlier three times per week. Not only will you see that this minor shift will give you the extra time in the morning, but it will change the entire outlook of your day.

4. Give Something Up – Often times when we want to achieve a new goal we fall short because we are not willing to give something up. We want to add this new goal to an already packed calendar. Perhaps, giving up Happy Hour every other Friday or giving up sleeping late two Saturdays per month will do the trick.

5. Lunch Hour – Take a good long hard look at your lunch hour. Is there any way that you could take 30 minutes for a brisk walk and then the other 30 for

actual eating? The phone calls you were going to make or emails you were going to send will be there waiting for you tomorrow.

Whether you realize it or not, finding more time to exercise is not simply a matter of time, it is a matter of practice, thinking, and creating as well. When you have the incentive, you will find the time.

Four Fun Ways to Burn More Calories

The truth of the matter is that everything we do, from walking up and down the stairs to house cleaning, burns calories. While we can think of many different ways to burn more calories, the fact remains that burning more calories than we consume is the key to weight loss. Most of us associate burning those calories with painful and dreaded methods in doing so. That does not mean, however, that we cannot have fun while burning those calories. Here then are four fun ways to burn more calories.

Sleep It Off

Although you may find it difficult to shut your mind off at night, did you know that getting a solid eight hours of sleep every night can burn well over 350 calories a night. It pays to get into a sleep-inducing routine every evening. By setting yourself up for a good night's sleep about an hour or two before settling in, not only do you get a healthy body, mind, and spirit, you also have the opportunity to burn calories without moving a muscle. Now, that is a win-win situation.

Skip the Car Wash

Instead of running the car through the car wash, gather your family around and make it a family affair. Not only will you save money by washing the car

yourself, you will also burn calories and spend time with your family. Washing your car can be fun, especially at the end when everyone gets the opportunity to wet each other with the hose - and you have the possibility of burning more than 100 calories.

Grow a Garden

Even if you do not have a green thumb, the benefits of growing a garden are numerous. You will have the benefit of trying something new and no matter how big or small, you're sure to achieve success. Gardening gives you the bonus of seeing something through from beginning to end. Whether you grow flowers or vegetables you get to see the birth of something new and gardening has the potential to help you burn up to 300 calories per hour. It also clarifies the mind.

Power Walking

If you enjoy going for a leisurely stroll, why not take it up a notch. Power walking is not only fun but also can be a great excuse to meet up with neighbors. Reach out to someone who is likely to be interested in walking but is at the same level as you. So if you are a beginner walker, do not get together with someone who is an avid runner or power walker. Begin with a beginner. As you go along, you will see that you are able to navigate hills and walk for longer time periods. It is great for the mind, body, soul, and for burning calories while having a fun conversation with your neighbor.

Fun Ways to Get Fit at Home

Not everybody is able to afford an expensive gym membership with all the bells and whistles. For many folks, after working all day and carrying out family obligations, even with pristine finances leaving the house is difficult at

best. That is where creativity in life comes in to the picture. Finding fun ways to get fit at home does not have to be expensive or painful. It can be filled with joy and humor as well.

Revert Back to Your Childhood Days

* If you do not have a bicycle, maybe it is time to invest in one. Bicycling can be fun and at the same time it eases your mind and gets you outdoors. Even if you only go for 15 minutes a day or for a longer excursion during the weekend, you will see how much fun it is to ride a bicycle again. In addition, of course, you have the opportunity to make it a family affair if you have children. Bicycling is a fantastic way to put the fun back into fitness.

* Break out the roller skates. Roller skating is back with a vengeance. Men and women all over the country are heading to indoor facilities to roller skate and heading outdoors again to roller blade with fervor. If you never learned how to roller skate when you were a kid, there are many groups to join for newcomers, beginners, and more advanced skaters as well.

* Jump roping and jumping jacks are not just for kiddies. These activities make for a great cardio activity and burn loads of calories too.

Break out the Technology

* With technology what it is today, there are no excuses not to be able to exercise at home and have loads of fun with that. Extreme dance, Zumba, and tennis games are all available through technology in the form of video games and fitness consoles. Every option from yoga to dance fever and bowling is available for your fun and enjoyment. The best part is that you get to enjoy time with family and friends, while working out and not even know that you are burning calories.

Dance, Sing, and Be Happy

Everything you do burns calories, even brushing your teeth. Doing karaoke while dancing at home is a great way to have fun and burn calories. Putting your favorite music CD in and dancing up a storm is a great way to exercise and have fun, especially when no one is looking. Popping in a Yoga DVD that takes it up to the next level such as Yogalates or power Yoga will increase your flexibility, but will also help you burn calories and pump up the cardio meter as well.

How to Boost Your Metabolism after 40

One of the main purposes of metabolism is to store and use energy. After 40 years on the planet, who could not derive benefits from storing and using energy more? As we enter the years after our 40th birthday, it stands to reason that our metabolism will slow down. We are not as active as we used to be and we may not be taking in the proper amount of nutrients.

When we were younger, we had our mothers to reinforce that we ate all of our broccoli or no dessert. After 40, we have no one to regulate us but ourselves. That is why we need to do all we can to ensure that we boost our metabolism after 40.

Be Picky and Proud of It

At this point, you need to be as discerning as possible as to what you allow to enter your digestive system. Picking and choosing the foods that you eat will determine how quickly or slowly your metabolism will work. Keep away from the carbs. Yes, that is correct, keep your carbohydrate intake to a minimum. And when you do have carbs, have the right ones. The right combination of fruits and vegetables that contain carbohydrates will make or break your metabolism.

Add – Do Not Just Subtract

It is important to take away white flour, sugar, too many carbohydrates and sweets from your diet. Moreover, while you are deleting negative sources from your diet that will slow down your metabolism, you need to consider adding other things to your diet. Things such as green tea, extra water, or even apple cider vinegar can play a role in increasing your metabolism. Do not be afraid to try a new fruit or vegetable. If you are reaching for chips and dip, think about red pepper strips and hummus. You never know what will work for you unless you try adding it into your diet.

Exercise

If your normal form of exercise is Yoga, try a power form of Yoga like Yogalates. If you take a leisurely stroll, consider taking a different path such as a more hilly road or even begin to power walk in between your causal walking. Begin to incorporate weights into your exercise routine. The extra pressure on your muscles will increase your metabolism as those muscles now have to work a little harder. In addition, you may want to take a dance class that has a bit more rhythm to it or take a beginners aerobics class to get that metabolism jump-started.

By changing your dietary habits and deleting some negative items, as well as adding some beneficial food sources and incorporating different types of exercise routines, you will see the beginnings of a whole new you and a whole new metabolism.

How to Find Affordable Fitness Gear for the Whole Family

If you have decided to join the fitness craze and have incorporated your entire family in the process, you know that you will have to make an investment up

front. You will have to make an investment of time, commitment, and of course of money.

Do not let the cost of gearing up for the whole family deter you from starting and completing your fitness goals. There are several ways around what could otherwise be an expensive new adventure.

Be Smart and Shop Around

Once you have everyone on board with fitness ideals, it is important to have everyone do their fair share in regard to what it will take to create a positive outcome. Have each family member research the area in which you intend to incorporate fitness into your lifestyle.

For example, if you should decide on bicycling, have everyone choose a website to explore and investigate to compare cost. Once everyone has gathered his or her information, have a family meeting to see which manufacturer offers the best coupons, or group discounts.

In this manner, you not only incorporate the family into the actual fitness activity, but also in the planning stage and the outcome.

One Man's Trash Is Another Man's Treasure

Although this adage has been around for a long time, it holds true with fitness gear as well. If you visit your local tag sales or garage sales, you will be astonished at the treasures you will find. Bicycles, once outgrown, are of no use and have very little resale value for homeowners. As a matter of fact, bicycles take up valuable space in a garage when not in use.

A bicycle might need a minor repair and with a short visit to the bicycle repair shop, you will be ready to ride away. Exercise gear such as Yoga balls, ice skates, and hand weights can also be found for a fraction of the cost.

Use the Internet

Do not shy away from buying sporting equipment on the internet. Reputable forums buy and sell fitness equipment every second of every day. You are bound to get an amazing deal, especially if you buy in bulk. Do not be afraid to check out a smaller, less known forum and try a small purchase to start out with; you never know what little treasure you may have stumbled upon.

Buy Fitness Wear after Season

If you are planning to take up volleyball as a family sport, visit the stores in early fall and you will be pleasantly surprised at how discounted warmer weather wear is and how much you can get on sale.

Ice hockey equipment bought in June or July may be found at a steeper discount as compared to buying it during the height of winter season.

With these tips, you can be smart, savvy, and fit all at the same time.

Ten Ideas to Get Your Family Active and Moving

If you want to get your family active and moving, sometimes coming at them with just one idea and forcing it upon them is not a great way to start. People always like when they are given choices. When it comes to family, having more choice will more than likely equate to having more success.

1. Take your entire family's personality into consideration – There may be an uneven number of males as compared to females in your family and you need to take gender, personal preference, and opinions into account. Before descending upon them with your new-found desire to become an active family, think about everyone's individual needs and desires.

2. Have a family meeting – Do not try to take this upon yourself because if you do, you may be setting yourself up for failure. Try to picture the conversation beforehand and have some answers ready for any complaints or negativity.

3. Let everyone take responsibility for their own choices – Let everyone in your family come to the table with their own choice of activity.

4. Take a vote – Once the initial conversations are over, take a vote on the most popular family activity, and begin planning.

5. Try a little bit of everything – Wouldn't it be fun to try each family member's idea or activity on a rotating basis? Here are some ideas:

- * You could go bowling every Thursday night, for example, for one month.

- * Alternate the following month with a round of volleyball at the beach every Saturday.

- * For the bicycle lovers, choose bicycling every Sunday over the summer. Bicycling is a great family outing and gets you and your family active and moving willingly.

6. Do not be afraid to try something new – If one of your family members suggests ice skating and you are the only one who does not know how - well, maybe it is time to learn. You can take a lesson or two while they skate circles around you.

7. Suggest a camping trip - Put forward this idea while unwittingly knowing that you are going to get your family active and moving by incorporating a nice mountain hike into that trip. Let them be involved in the purchase of equipment.

8. Show that you are enthusiastic and committed – By showing and keeping your enthusiasm, you will keep the positive energy alive. While they may not have a say in the matter of whether or not they will stay active and moving,

they do have a say in what they do. Once the momentum starts rolling, it will be hard to stop.

9. Follow up – By having regular meetings incorporating the theme of family fitness, you will set the bar high by letting your family know that this is an ongoing commitment to family fitness and not just a fad.

10. Join a club – By joining a club that offers family activities with something for everyone, you offer everyone the chance to exercise together in the same facility while exercising apart. It is still a fine way to incorporate family activity.

The Secrets to Enjoying Exercise

If you are like most folks, the mere thought of exercising is enough to have your mind make up all sorts of excuses why you should not, could not, and potentially will not exercise. However, there are some secrets and tips to really begin to enjoy exercise to its fullest.

Grab a Buddy

Often times we can view exercise regimens as solitary confinement - like a sentence we have to endure all on our own. Guaranteed you have a pal or co-worker who feels exactly the same way. The old adage that misery loves company would apply in this situation. However, once you get together with a friend to exercise and actually go to the gym or take that power walk or a Zumba class, you will begin to see how much fun it really is and begin to enjoy exercising.

Change your View of Exercising

Only you have the ability to change how you perceive something. Only when you have associated positive thoughts and feelings with exercise will you begin to override the negative connotations with exercising. You will find that excuses such as being tired or not having enough time will be outweighed by feelings of accomplishment such as recognition that you burned 500 calories that night or even the simple fact that you feel energized and were glad you went.

Focus on the positive results and feelings you get the first time you go to exercise and bring that feeling back up to the forefront of your mind the next time you are heading out to exercise.

Be Creative

Be creative with your exercise routines and regimens. You do not have to think about gigantic machinery that you are unfamiliar with or a gym full of strangers. Find something you love to do and incorporate that into exercise. For some, that is walking briskly and for others it is dancing your heart out. Dance is not only a creative outlet, it is also one that will burn hundreds of calories. Even if you are not a professional dancer, taking a swing class or a jazz class is only the beginning to discovering one of the secrets to enjoying exercise.

Make a Date with Exercising

If you leave exercising to a chance date or time, you will more than likely set yourself up for failure. Make a specific date and time for exercise, whether you go out to the gym or do it at home. Write in on your calendar, put it on your to do list and commit to it. After you are done, you will be glad you did.

The Snowball Effect of Exercising

Everything we do in this universe has a trickle-down effect that comes along with it. If we smile at others, others smile back at us; if we are in a bad mood, others will pick up on that and become edgy as well. This is known as the snowball effect. Did you know, however, that exercise could have a snowball effect as well?

Well, it can. Exercising is not only good for you; it is good for the universe as well. There are so many positive effects on ourselves from exercising, yet we do not realize how many positive results it can have on those around us at the same time.

Exercise and Its Health Benefits to Others

We all know that exercise has healthy heart benefits and keeps our joints and muscles strong. However, did you know that exercise also has health benefits to others? When we exercise, we take care of our bodies. We rid our bodies of toxins and we ensure that our machine known as the human body is working at its fullest potential. When we keep our bodies healthy, we have more power to ward off illness, disease, and even common ailments that may otherwise have had a chance to grow and thrive in an otherwise stagnant body.

Benefits the Body, but Also the Soul

When you exercise, of course you see results on your physical body; however, did you ever notice the effects it has on your soul? Notice the difference between when you regularly exercise and when you skip a routine or even a week for that matter. Do you notice that you are a little more edgy or a bit more down in the mouth? Exercise releases so many things that can increase your mood while boosting your metabolism. Exercising has a trickle-down effect that runs from your body into your soul.

If You Are Happy, Everyone Else Around May Be Happier

Did you ever notice when you are in a foul mood, it seems to have a spiral

effect on your significant other, your co-workers, and your family members. However, if you are upbeat and positive, that seems to flow through the universe like wildfire.

Exercising makes you happy. Thinking about it or worrying about how you will do it or not having enough time may be a hurdle you have to leap, but once you do it, the feeling of accomplishment and self-satisfaction and all those good endorphins are presented to every person you encounter. You may run into a sales clerk who is having an off day, and your upbeat attitude and healthy smile may change or break the cycle for them to have a productive day themselves.

As you can see, exercise can have a snowball effect; one in which other individuals might want to join in on and throw some snowballs themselves.

Volunteer Your Way to Skinny

It is often said that the best way to help yourself is to help someone else. There are so many individuals who are in need of things in life that there is never a lack of volunteer opportunities. Volunteering has so many benefits such as feeling good and doing good while helping others. Moreover, volunteering can have a positive effect on your fitness and on your weight.

Volunteer Your Way to Skinny

Everything you do burns calories, from housekeeping to cooking. When you volunteer, more often than not there are physical requirements you need to fulfill.

Food Pantries

Sometimes being of service to others many mean moving and lifting boxes in order to stock food pantry shelves. Pounding the pavement to collect those items, sort, and store them are part of many food pantry programs as well.

Walk-a-Thons

Dozens of organizations out there have awareness walks in which you collect money for a good cause. Many of these events include walks over 5 miles and some are considered two-day walks. When you walk for a cause or for a cure, not only are you doing a good deed, you also feel good and burn calories.

Athletics

There are so many volunteer opportunities involving sport of every kind. There are bowling fundraisers, basketball games, charitable hockey and softball games. If you are an athlete or just want to have some fun while raising money for a cause, you can do so all the while burning calories and increasing your metabolism. The more you move, the more you lose.

Hit the Sidewalk Running

If walking is not your thing, you may be best suited to hitting the pavement and asking local businesses for donations. Donations for fundraisers can be made either in the form of monetary donations or merchandise and even gift certificates. If you think that this is not a great way to volunteer your way to skinny, think again! Seeking donations for several days in a row by foot can get your body moving - and that is just the beginning.

Setting Up and Tearing Down

Many events and venues need volunteers for set-up and tear-down once the event is over. Setting up may mean anything from decorating to moving tables and chairs. Moving, lifting, and carrying can burn calories as well.

So if you think that volunteering only benefits the other party, think again. Volunteering is good for the mind and the soul; however, it reaps many rewards for the body as well.

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