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How To Motivate Yourself To Exercise

It can be tough to get motivated to exercise and easy to make excuses to avoid it. You know the drill:

- I'm too tired
- I'm too anxious about whatever to do anything
- It is so cold outside
- I'm so comfortable and cozy

Well, this can be the year you:

- Run (or walk) that 5K
- Lose that 20 or 40 extra pounds
- Wear your favorite jeans again
- Make it up those stairs without getting winded!

You are ready to make it happen! Now is the time to free yourself from all those self-imposed barriers and get that workout going! For tips and tricks on how to get yourself going, skim through the following information.

Not every item will apply to every person. Take what you want from the following list and don't worry about the rest. There is a list of everything at the end of this article for review. You can pick and choose what you want to use.

So relax and enjoy!

GOALS



Goal-setting is its own very in-depth topic. We'll only scratch the surface here. Your goal could be to simply up the stairs in your house without aching or becoming winded. It could be to compete in an iron man race and place in the top ten percent. It could be to lose a certain amount of weight or fit into your favorite clothes again. Whatever your goal - **YOU CAN DO IT.**

If you have a big goal, break it up into smaller goals. If you want to lose 20 pounds, break it up into 5-pound increments. Or 2-pound increments.

If you want to run a marathon, break it up into running a 5K first, then running a 10K, and so forth. Or join a local running club or program geared toward marathon training.

Also setting little goals to go along with each workout can help. If you are going to the gym, something as simple as "spend 30 minutes lifting weights today" can work.

Maybe you have exercise equipment at home. "Spend 15 minutes on the treadmill today", or "walk 2 miles today" can each serve as great starting goals for the day.

MOTIVATION



Once we set our easy starting goal, we want to motivate ourselves to reach that goal.

First, surround yourself with motivation! You can add lots of inspiring and motivating pictures around your house. You can put pictures on your bathroom mirror or on your fridge. You want to see these motivational pictures many times a day. They can be pictures of beautiful scenery. They can be pictures of someone you admire. They can even be pictures of yourself back when you were at a greater level

of fitness! These can serve as a constant reminder of what you want to achieve.

Always use positive self-talk! The fact is, you CAN do this! Whatever your goal is, you can achieve it! Look up others in a similar situation to yours who have accomplished what you want! Read their story (or stories) every day if needed for inspiration! If they can do it, you can do it! Use others for inspiration and listen to that voice inside you that says I CAN DO THIS!

Get on YouTube or some other streaming service and look up inspirational videos. They are everywhere online - you can find them with a minimal amount of effort! Find one or a handful you can watch every day, or for a motivational boost. Get yourself motivated and inspired to get it done!

PREWORKOUT



First, everyone always has lots to do. And fitting in any kind of exercise can be a challenge. if you are a scheduler, add your workout to your calendar or your to-do list. This is no guarantee you'll do it, but it doesn't hurt to have it on your planner!

Put out your workout clothes the night before or when you wake up in the morning. If they are there staring at you, you are more likely to follow through on your workouts. It shouldn't take you any time to put your clothes out on your bed. And if that doesn't work, lay them out on your couch, or your favorite recliner. Give yourself a little exercise, and a pang of guilt, having to move them just to sit down!

Do you have a favorite show you can stream on Netflix on your iPad or phone while on the treadmill? Do you have a podcast you can listen to while working out? Do you enjoy audiobooks? Would a playlist of some of your favorite songs help motivate you? Plan out something you can listen to or watch while you are working out.

When it is time to work out, get up and put those clothes on! You can tell yourself, I'm going to put my workout clothes on and see how I feel. Don't overthink this or get too caught up or overwhelmed with the rest of it. Take one step at a time. Put on those workout clothes. Set an alarm for getting dressed if need be! Play that playlist or podcast that gets you motivated and moving!

Look into the various fitness and exercise apps that exist out there. These days there are all kinds of apps. What kind of apps are there?

- workout tracking apps
- distance measurement apps
- stretching apps
- yoga apps
- calorie counting apps
- workout routine apps
- group class workout apps

There is an app for that! If you have an app in mind, get online and search for it! And let it help you achieve your fitness goals!

MAKE IT SOCIAL



Some of us need workout partners. If that is you, find yourself a partner, or 3! Find a different partner for every day of the week if that's what it takes! Lots of people want to increase their fitness level! You can post on Facebook or post on your church bulletin board. Do whatever works for you! Start a walking club, a gym club, or a group stretching club in the park. Or find someone else to exercise with you 3 days a week. You don't have to sacrifice your social life and be a loner to get in better shape!

Some of us don't want to include others in our workouts. Some of us do. If you want to include others in your workouts, look for group workouts. Most gyms have group yoga and various levels of cardio workouts led by professionals. If you want, you can join these group classes and get whatever social aspect you need.

Get on Facebook and create a motivational group for you and your workout buddies. You can encourage and motivate each other to achieve your fitness goals! You can share your wins, no matter how small, and cheer others on as they achieve their wins as well!

Or create an accountability group on Facebook. All the members make fitness commitments to the group. And when you don't fulfill your promise, the rest of the group knows it. Are you going to have to buy

everyone lunch if you don't make it to the gym 3 days this week? You don't want to fail the group!

TAKE IT SLOW AND EASY



It can be difficult to transition into a new workout routine and healthier lifestyle. Most important is to start small. Even if that means a 5-minute walk around the block every day for the first week, do **SOMETHING!** Start small and build up on it. There is no reason to start off with a 90-minute intense cycling class when you haven't exercised in 2 years.

Not only start small but also start slow. Some set a goal to work out 6 days a week. Some miss the first day or two and then decide this week is blown! They'll actually decide to wait until the next week to get started! And it is only **TUESDAY!**

If your schedule is that busy, start by working out **ONE DAY** a week. Add a day a week each week (or every other week) until you have built up to the workout frequency you want. Start slow and incorporate working out into your schedule as you can. You are working on a permanent lifestyle change and so give it time. Too big a change and it just isn't going to happen.

Many of us are not on any real schedule to meet our fitness goals. Yes, it would be nice to do it before summer, or the reunion, or our wedding. It would be nice to lose a bunch of weight before whatever big event is coming up. The fact is, any time is a good time to start. We want to make this a permanent part of our life, not some temporary diet craze for one specific event in 2-12 weeks. So while a few of us can lose 40 pounds in 2 months, for the rest that is unrealistic and extremely unhealthy. So take it slow and easy and make small permanent lifestyle changes that we'll stick with.

So many people get hung up on what do to. What exercise routine will give me the best bang for the buck? Well, the best exercise you can do is the exercise you are WILLING to do! It doesn't matter what you do, get out there and get going! Pick something to do and do it! Start off with the treadmill and walk for 5 minutes if nothing else! Over time you can grow into whatever glorious workout routine you want! You can spend a lifetime learning new amazing workout routines to try. You'll know when you are ready for bigger challenges. Let them come slowly and don't push your body too hard.

Another strategy to use is the "just 10 minutes" strategy. Go and work out for 10 minutes. If after 10 minutes you decide you are done for the day - then you are done! Don't make yourself feel guilty, don't force yourself to do any more exercising if you aren't feeling in. And remember, you will be back next time and the time after that. This is a permanent addition to your healthy lifestyle. So "just 10 minutes" today is perfectly acceptable.

THE WORKOUT



When first starting out with any fitness program, many believe that variety is the spice of life! You don't want to burn out by doing the same thing over and over again. So try lots of different things and see what you actually enjoy doing! And keep on trying new things!

Once you find something you enjoy doing, keep on doing that! Remember, the best workout is the workout you do consistently. If you love doing whatever your exercise is, even better! Examples of fun exercises include rock climbing, cycling, and hiking. There are people out there who love doing these exercises day after day! They can't wait to get to their favorite activities! That can be you!

If you are doing cardio or weights find something to focus on. Put together a playlist, pick out a podcast, binge-watch a show on Netflix, or get an app like Zombies, Run! Find something to keep your brain occupied during cardio or weights if you need to.

POST-WORKOUT



OK - you finished your workout - Congratulations! How do you feel? Do you feel amazing? Do you feel a sense of accomplishment? Do you feel tired and sore - but in a good way? Capture those feelings in a note to yourself! Are you proud of yourself? Include that in your note as well! Capture all those good feelings immediately after your workout, and write them down! Keep these notes and let them serve as motivation in the future! These notes are added to your pre-workout routine and give you that extra lift to get you moving.

Along with your motivational notes, you can also track your progress in whatever way you like. You can use a wall calendar or a spreadsheet or a poster-sized activity chart or anything else you care to. Track how many minutes you walked, how far you ran, or how many wall push-ups you managed to do today. Over time you will improve, and you'll see how much you've done after a month or 3 months, or a year. Once you start tracking, you'll want to keep that momentum going!

CONCLUSION



Remember you want to train your motivation like any other muscle. Accept that some days it just isn't going to happen, and that is OK. Every day is different. On some days you knock out your daily fitness goals without blinking or breaking a sweat. On other days you may want to lay on the couch with a pizza and binge-watch your favorite show. You want to make sure to find the right balance between rest and fitness and achieve your goals. Start slow and build that motivation muscle. Make fitness an integral part of your daily routine over time. You can do this!

LIST



As promised, here is a condensed list of items to help you get motivated and hit your fitness goals. Pick and choose which ones of these you feel will help you. There is absolutely no need to do them all, or any of them for that matter. Pick any you want, get to it, and make it happen!

- Select your main fitness goal
- Break up that big fitness goal into smaller goals
- Select your daily process goals at the start of each week
- Find pictures you can put up around your house for motivation
- Find at least 6 youtube videos you can watch for motivation as needed
- Find at least 6 online examples of people like you who have achieved what you want to achieve
- Schedule out your workouts
- Prepare your workout gear every night before you go to bed, or every morning when you wake up
- Select a show, podcast, audiobook, or playlist that will motivate you to exercise
- Set a daily workout alarm, and get up and put on your gym clothes as soon as it goes off
- Select an app that will help you with your workouts - be it motivational or tracking or instructional
- Find a workout buddy or a few workout buddies
- Find a gym with group classes you can take part in

- Create an online group with your friends for mutual motivation and support
- Create an online accountability group
- Start small with something super quick - 5 or 10 minutes is fine when just starting out
- Limit your first week to only 1-3 workouts and build up slowly
- Start with an easy workout like walking or treadmill at first, and grow from there
- Tell yourself that you only have to go for 5 or 10 minutes, and you can stop after that if you want
- In the first week, come up with 3 different things you can do for fitness, and try each of them as you are able
- Incorporate a show, podcast, audiobook, playlist, and/or interactive app into your workout
- After every workout, write yourself a note about how great you feel and keep it - and read it next time!
- Track your progress as you like
- And remember to go easy on yourself! Make this a lifelong pursuit!!

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