

Overcoming Exercise Excuses

"Where the heart is willing, it will find a thousand ways, but where it is unwilling, it will find a thousand excuses." This is an old Greek proverb.

Ignorance is bliss - one of the risks of self-awareness is that you can't play dumb anymore. If you know what you need, you have to deal with the question of what you're going to do about it. You can't just say, "Oh that's not important to me!"

Knowing your needs and how you can satisfy them through a lifetime fitness commitment empowers you to move ahead in life - to make the dramatic shift from not knowing who you are or what you want in life to ways that really work. You must become your own fitness guru, your own fitness expert. The solution lies within you, not in some fancy fitness magazine or the words of someone with a perfect body. You should not doubt yourself, thinking you're incapable of making good things happen to you, like building a leaner, energized, great looking body and have a wonderful life.

As human beings, we tend to make excuses. These are the common ones.

1. It's too hard. (Are you sure?)
2. It takes too much time. (No, it doesn't.)
3. I can't afford it. (Of course, you can.)
4. I feel self-conscious. (This is about you, not the ones watching you.)
5. I lack support from family and friends. (Find it somewhere else.)
6. I'm too tired. (Exercise and you will stop feeling tired)
7. It's too late to start exercising. (It is never too late.)

Excuse #1 - It's Too Hard

Once you begin, it only takes a few minutes until the "feel good" endorphins kick in, and the workout feels great, and your self-esteem goes through the roof. It gets better – the exercises get easier, the more "starts" you have under your belt. You know the transformation is real - you can count on it. Now, stop saying this and just go for it. Come out of your physical comfort zone and experience some mental pain - the anguish of change, the effort to stick with it, and maybe underneath, the liking yourself enough to continue something that is totally for yourself. You are worth it, so do it.

Excuse #2 - It Takes Too Much Time

Experts offer two well-worn arguments against this objection. On the one hand, people who are extremely busy with work, family, and social obligations still find time to exercise. Moreover, once they have developed the exercise habit, they wouldn't think for one second of dropping it. On the other hand, exercise doesn't have to mean going to the health club for 2 hours a day. It can be the "accumulating" principle - 10 minutes here, 10 minutes there, totaling at least 30 minutes of activity daily. Both of these arguments are valid, but there's an important issue to consider - your personal schedule. The time is always there – it is just hidden away in poor scheduling or in making choices about what you'd rather do. It's deciding to change your priorities that make time appear.

Excuse #3 - I Can't Afford It

Actually, you can't afford NOT to do it. Sure, you need to be outfitted with shorts, sweats, headphones, weight belt, warm-up suits, cross-training shoes, club membership, home exercise equipment, etc. The point is – you need very little! If you think about it, you may have so much money invested in your health and fitness; you might as well do it. So, go do it. When you look at it more closely, fitness is pretty inexpensive entertainment. Some music helps. Good footwear for a walk or run. Some people even make their own weights by filling milk jugs with water. Where there's a will there's a way. People are funny sometimes; if their backs are against the wall, they can get pretty creative. Instead of the Stairmaster, use your own steps in your home. Buy used exercise equipment (even get it cheaper at garage sales!). Use chairs for dips and step-ups. There are lots of possibilities for great workouts. The most critical item is one you cannot buy - the motivation to do it.

Excuse #4 - I'd Feel Self-Conscious

Maybe you feel embarrassed because you think your body is too fat, not muscular enough, or just not RIGHT. Or you feel uncoordinated, or just plain incompetent, like everybody's looking at you, thinking, "Boy, that person doesn't know what s/he's doing! Why doesn't s/he just give it up?" When you get distracted from your goals, you pay more attention to what you LOOK like rather than what you FEEL like. Your mind will mix up what's important, substituting a superficial focus for an internal one. On days like this, it's going to take an extra effort to push the superficial away. You'll find the more you get into your workout, the less self-conscious you'll feel.

Excuse #5 - I Lack Support From Family & Friends

People we love can be our greatest allies or our worst enemies when we're beginning to exercise. If your friends and family are a little self-conscious about their bodies, it's no wonder they may feel threatened by your sudden interest in fitness. Ask them, "Why, if you're supposed to love and care about me, would you object to my doing something good for myself? Do you feel like I'm abandoning you, like going to some kind of 'opposition'?" Get them to talk about their feelings about this. Understand where they're coming from. Then explain why you're doing what you're doing. Besides, if you can invite them to join you in your new lifestyle, it might make things better all around.

Excuse #6 - I'm Too Tired To Exercise

Some individuals cannot exercise in the morning. Some individuals cannot exercise in the evening. Some can only exercise in the afternoon. No matter how much caffeine you give your body, it just won't allow you to work out sometimes. By the end of your workday, your body feels dead, day after day. The truth is – on days when you feel fatigued, you may need exercise the MOST. A tired mind plus a good workout equals rejuvenation.

The more you experience the boost you get from exercise, the more you can convince your mind that you're doing a great thing for it.

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