

Fitness - Mantras of Motivation

Fitness is a friend

Why do people procrastinate when it comes to exercising? Why is there this kind of an intuitive resistance towards a perfectly innocent activity? Over the years, we've met several people who want to lose weight. They are ready to go on a diet. But it stops there. Talk about exercising and they switch off instantly.

We think the seeds of this resistance could lie in the regimented structure laid down in our school days. To start with, it was only for Physical Training classes that we had to change into shorts. Then, the instructor would stand in front of us and snap out orders. And we were supposed to go through the entire regimented course like robots. While we were being physically trained, we were not getting physically educated. Nor was any attempt made to make these sessions interesting. There was no music to liven up the tempo along with our circulation. The teacher was not one-of-the-boys/girls, but more like an army general. No wonder: most of us left our schools with the great feeling of freedom. Out in the wide, new world, there would be no boring exercising drills to go through. We were free to choose what we wanted to do and exercising was certainly not on the list.

In adulthood, with our prejudices firmly in place, the bias is further cemented. Coaches, instructors are seen as 'experts.' Books are often written by such 'perfect specimens' who impose their regimented orientation on the reader. An athlete has a certain goal in life. He will make time for exercising. He will sacrifice social activities, go for the burn, punish himself to reach higher planes, and at the end of it is that tantalisingly attractive prize. But the majority of people do not want to become athletes. And this is where such books have let them down. For they only enforce that terrible feeling that you've-got-to-exercise-until-you-drop. Through our book, we intend to change this trend of thought.

The third failure is that it is seen as a therapy. After the person has had a severe illness, he is advised by the doctor to take a daily walk. So, fitness is caught in a vicious cycle. The general perception is: that boring activity called exercise is only for athletes or for the sick, two extreme ends of the spectrum. How ironic! In the process, the normal, average healthy person is overlooked.

Our social values and hierarchy reinforce this prejudice. As the executive rises with promotions and perks, he sits around more. Obviously, he leads a comfortable life. He has a peon to carry his briefcase or a caddy for his golf gear. At the snap of his fingers, he gets his favourite drink placed in front of him.

It is time we looked at exercising without all these fogged-up ideas. Recognise the fact that when a severe illness - like a heart attack - strikes, it knows no hierarchy. Every one of us has this it-can't-happen-to-me feeling. Why not turn it into i-won't-let-it-happen-to-me?

What we'd advise is: make a start. With aerobics that make you lose fat and abdominals to tone up your stomach muscles. A combination of the two would give you the desired results. If you find it tedious, say, after a week, change the combination. If you come across a new exercise, try it out. There is no rule that says you must stick to one structured set of exercise to lose weight.

Exercising is like eating. The same meal dished out continuously for a week puts you off. A new recipe awakens the taste buds. Similarly, change your exercises to awaken your energy buds. The kind of exercise you choose should suit your individuality. You can put on your favourite music or programme while you do it. If you are a restless person, you could even do one exercise in your bedroom, the next in your study, the third in your living room. By such variations, you will never find it boring.

Fitness is friend. It's as necessary as brushing your teeth. You spend a few minutes every day to brush those ivory wonders. Just spend a few more minutes four times a week to stay in shape. Don't let that tartar (read:fat) get at your muscles. An inactive life rots the insides. An active life style of exercising brushes up energy levels. There is no instructor breathing down your neck. The choice is yours: to exercise or not to exercise. We hope you make the right one.

About the Author

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