

Exercise – How To Get Started & Stay!

January 1st is a beginning for many new exercise enthusiasts. Brimming with hope and desire, people's motivation is high and invigorating! New shoes and workout clothes, new membership (for some); everyone is ready to implement their new healthy behavior. People are determined and disciplined. They make a schedule of when and where they are going to do their exercise. Many start with a 5-day-a-week routine, at least 30 minutes a day. Although this regimen will yield results, assuming your goal is weight loss and general conditioning, the majority of new exercisers will not maintain this routine 6 months down the road.

While perusing several lists of popular New Year's resolutions, "getting fit" was in the top 5 on each list; this makes sense – people want to look and feel good! However, in my experience, "wanting" and "doing" are two different things. The drop-out rate for New Year's exercisers is so predictable that fitness facilities will sign more people than the facility can hold. These facilities know that between 60-90 days most "resolution" people will be gone (30-50% depending on the source). How can we reduce this drop-out rate? There are many variables to consider before starting an exercise routine:

What is your motivation and how will you stay motivated?

What is your ultimate goal (value-based)?

Where are you going to exercise – at home or in a gym?

What type of exercise?

How do you learn to do what it is you want to do?

Do you need a Personal Trainer?

How do you find the time?

Are you going to exercise alone or with a partner?

Read those questions again. Motivation is key – to look and feel good is generally not a strong enough. Your motivation has to be tied to your value system; it has to be something internal. Your values determine much of who you are and why you do what you do every day. Hence, when you can tie exercise to your values you will have a much deeper and longer-lasting motivation. Example: "I love my grandchildren and I want to be fit enough to play with them, to take

them to Disney L, and to be here for as long as I can.” The love for his/her grandchildren, how much he/she values their grandchildren, and longevity are the motivators. You can see how much deeper this motivation runs. To feel and look better are fine motivators, but I am challenging you to go deeper. Why do you want to look and feel better? What is that going to do for you? How is it going to add to the quality of your life? Here are a few values. Pick some that speak to you:

Love	Honesty
Achievement	Diligence
Friendship	Family
Personal growth	Leadership
Quality Relationships	Integrity
Meaningful work	Self-respect
Inner harmony	Intellectual and/or physical stimulation
Wealth	
Stability	

Being more physically fit will enhance each of these values. Connect your exercise goals with some of your values, and you will be exercising longer and more successfully!!

Practically speaking, the number one component of any successful exercise program is CONSISTENCY! Start slowly and build up over time versus going gangbusters the first 2 months. So how do you decide what is right for you? When thinking about “how often” and “how long” the numbers you come up with have to feel like an 8 to a 10 in your heart and mind (10 being “it is definitely going to happen”, 1 being “no chance it is going to happen”). Be honest with yourself. If 2x per week for 20 minutes is what feels like an 8-10, then start there. This is not a race; stay far far away from comparing yourself with what others are doing. After a period of time, this routine will feel too easy and you will want to increase it. If your exercise routine becomes drudgery, it will slowly eek its way out of your life...guaranteed. Try new and different activities. Take group classes. Join activity groups – hikers, skiers, adult leagues. Work with a Personal Trainer. When people pay for a service, they will show up. Exercise with a friend, co-

worker, or spouse. Partner training has a much higher success rate than exercising alone.

Adding exercise to your life is a commitment – it is not a simple decision. It takes time and effort. Give yourself permission to really examine all the variables. Ask for help. Step outside of your comfort zone; we have to do this in order to implement change. Be kind. Brow-beating yourself (I have to, I ought to, I should) will only work for a little while...IT DOES NOT PROMOTE LASTING CHANGE. When you connect exercise with what you value, maintain consistency, and you invite another person to workout with you, your chance for developing this life-enhancing habit will, at least, triple!!