

SESSION 7 FITNESS TIPS

For some folks, working out is the highlight of their day. Others look upon their exercise routine with emotions similar to a stint on the rack. The secret of a successful exercise program is to set it up in such a way that it's fun, not work. We all work enough as it is; we don't need to be making more for ourselves!

So, before we even think about ab crunches or leg lifts (ugh!), let's define some goals for ourselves. First, we have to know why we want to do this. To feel better? Doctor's orders? To trim some of the love handles off? To play a competitive sport? To keep up with the kids? Listen...any reason is fine...just know what yours is, because that will determine your mental approach.

Why does what you think about your workouts matter? Because if you don't believe in your gut that this is something you truly enjoy doing, or at least feel is worth it to get the results you want, you won't incorporate it into your life. And if you won't fit it into your life, sooner or later you'll stop doing it. And if you stop doing it, you'll chalk it up as just another failed attempt at "shaping up". And that's the **last** thing we want to have happen.

Let's talk for a moment about a couple of very basic concepts about human beings. First, we were meant to move. The way our bodies are put together, the sizes and shapes of our muscles, the way our skeletons are hooked up, even the way our eyes and ears work, were all designed to be used while we're in motion. We need to keep that in mind as we plan our exercise routines.

Second, we humans, for the most part, resist change. Even with the purest of motivations and the best of intentions, it takes someone an average of 21 days...three weeks...before a new way of doing something becomes a habit. So...remember, if you stick with your new routine, once we set it up, one day at a time for three weeks, it will have become a habit, and you won't have to think about it, you'll just do it!

So...let's talk about activity...movement...getting our bodies in gear. Now...list on a sheet of paper five physical things that you like to do. They can be absolutely anything, from walking the dog in the park to cleaning out the closets (some people actually get a charge out of this!), to bowling or golf to hitting tennis balls back and forth with a friend. I mean literally anything you like to do that isn't couch potatoing.

Do you see a few activities on there that you really enjoyed at some point in your life, but haven't done in a while? Like since the flood of Noah. When you start to realize that you are depriving yourself of the enjoyment of those sports and activities, it starts to make you want to go out and find a buddy to hit tennis balls with....or take a walk...or take a swim.....doesn't it? Sure it does, you really like

those things, that's why you wrote it down. And why aren't you doing them? Well mostly because you just got busy doing other things, and haven't really taken the time to do some of the activities that you really enjoyed. So go ahead, add something highly enjoyable back into your life. It's a great stress reducer, it gets you outside into the fresh air, and you'll get some exercise without grinding it away on a stationary bike. Now, don't misunderstand. Bike time can be great time.... but the activity of doing things outside with friends just seems to add some pep and variety to your daily routines.

See what we're getting at? Many of us, simply through the pressures and adjustments of life in the job lane, have let activities that we truly enjoyed drop out of our lives. How many of your favorite activities have a last time column that has been over a year? Or even ten years? Now, don't dump all those activities back into your daily routine. Chances are you are a lot busier and can't handle it right now, but you can be sure that adding one or two back in to your life, will have some very good results. Start slow, be careful...and enjoy!

It's important to point out that we are not discouraging a formal exercise program or aerobic workout. As a matter of fact we recommend it. But we are also realists and we know that to be effective an exercise program must fit into your lifestyle.

Exercise:

List some activities that you have enjoyed doing in the past that include some form of physical activity. What kind of things would you enjoy doing that would give the benefits of exercising, but not be part of a formal program?

Examples:

Dance class (maybe swing or latin)

Tennis lessons

Golf lessons or playing

Daily walks with a buddy