

# Get Motivated

How do you motivate yourself to exercise when your mood is getting in the way? Kate Larsen, a certified personal and professional coach in Minneapolis, offers these ideas:

**1 Overcome Your Distracting Thoughts.** Are your thoughts jumping ahead to future demands or lingering over past experiences? Remind yourself of how precious exercise time is—there will be plenty of time to return to distractions when your workout is over. Tell yourself, “Okay, I only have an hour to exercise, but I’m going to completely concentrate on it.”

**2 Examine How Your Body Feels.** Are you feeling fatigued, stiff, tense, lethargic or restless? Perhaps you are training too hard and need to cut back a little. Or perhaps you need to increase your stretching and decrease your cardio time. Your body also may be sending signals about other lifestyle concerns that need attention—overwork, emotional strain, poor nutrition or not enough sleep. Listen carefully and adjust accordingly, but don’t give up on your commitment to stay active.

**3 Visualize Your Achievement.** Imagine how you will feel after fulfilling your exercise commitment for the day. Envision yourself stretching and reaching with full extension and perfect body alignment. Picture fat and stress running off your body along with sweat. Or dream that you’re in top condition, playing in the Super Bowl or at Wimbledon, running the last mile of the Boston Marathon or cycling in the Ironman competition.

**4 Talk Back to Your Gremlins.** Do you often tell yourself, “I’m too out of shape,” “I’m so slow,” “I’ve tried this before, it never worked,” or “I’m too old”? Talk back to those “gremlin” voices. Say to yourself, “I can do this one step at a time. I am stronger. I will stick with this program.” Every time you hear the negative self-talk, challenge it.

**5 Listen to Your Joy.** Are you choosing activities you like or those you *wish* you would like? It’s true that sometimes you need to exercise when you simply do not feel

like it—but if you are not getting any enjoyment from your activities, you may need to look for workouts that better match your personality and interests.

**6 Examine Your Plateau.** Ask yourself, “What needs to change for me to feel good about my exercise?” Clarify the gap between what you are experiencing and what you *want* to experience, then make the changes.

**7 Wake Up Your Routine.** Try a new kind of workout or change the sequence or frequency of your exercises. You do not have to add a lot of time to your workouts to see change; instead try a harder level or increase the speed on your cardio equipment. Push yourself a little.

**8 Compromise Your Approach.** If you decide to skip your morning power walk, plan on taking a 10-minute walk at lunch and another quick walk during your afternoon break. Plan ways to make up for lost exercise time, like taking a hike with the kids on the weekend or scheduling an extra training session.

**9 Recommit to Your Goals.** Activity levels greatly impact your physical ability, risk of disease, stress response, energy level, appearance and attitude. Remind yourself that positive habits are created *one choice, one moment* at a time. Even if you choose not to work out today, make a commitment to get back on track tomorrow, no matter what.

**10 Reinforce Your Exercise Values.** Spend 20 minutes writing down the reasons why staying active is important to you and why you cannot quit now. The secret to success is not willpower, it’s “want-power.” Choose to stay active not because you have to—but because you want to.

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