

howto...

be motivated to exercise

Being motivated to exercise requires you to re-shape the way you think about exercise. Even people who despise exercise or who do not see it as important for them can learn to enjoy exercise and maintain it in the long term, just by thinking differently about it.

So, what is motivation? The word 'motivation' is Latin for movement and is defined as '*an interaction between the drives and desires that fuel behaviour*'. Motivation is characterised by taking action continuously, over and over again. Motivation is movement. Therefore by starting to exercise you are in fact starting the process of creating your own motivation.

Despite what most people think, motivation is not the 'thing' you need to start exercising; it is an approach that you use to keep yourself exercising once you're underway. So if you are still sitting in front of the television waiting for "the motivation to exercise," you'll be waiting a very long time.

The good news is that you already have everything you need to be motivated to exercise; you just don't know it yet!

What do you really want?

Most of us exercise without a real goal in mind and then wonder why we never feel like we are achieving anything. Motivation usually occurs when you are working towards something that you really want, therefore unless you have clear goals, you have no direction to travel.



So, why not set some realistic and meaningful goals. Take a pen and paper now (yes now!) and write down the three things that you most want to work towards in the next 12 months.

Step outside of your comfort zone

Your 'comfort zone' is made up of the familiar, of all of the feelings and behaviours you are used to. It is comfortable staying with the familiar and it's often uncomfortable to change - but change is what we want. If you feel a bit uncomfortable when you start to exercise it is usually a good sign that you are moving forward, and remember nothing is more exhilarating than the sense of achievement you'll get from doing things you never thought you could do.

Keeping it up

Monitoring your progress can help you to see that your actions are bringing you closer to your goals, and as a result your motivation will increase. An exercise diary can be a useful way to record brief notes about your progress.

As you reach your goals you will need to keep setting new ones. No one is able to automatically maintain motivation. Motivation needs to be constantly fuelled by new actions, new aspirations and new vision.

Smell the roses

When you exercise, take some time to 'smell the roses'. Choose activities that you enjoy and be sure to take a moment to appreciate your surrounds, or your company when you do it. Afterwards, take a moment to enjoy the sense of achievement and feel the endorphins flowing through your veins. Then next time you are deciding whether or not to exercise, the positive memories you stored will be recalled to help motivate you to do it all again.

Relapse is normal

No matter how determined you are, at some point or another, it is normal to relapse and slip back into old behaviours. Do not allow a relapse to damage your self esteem, but instead use it to strengthen your determination. The key to maintaining exercise in the long term is not to aim for perfection, but to keep getting back on the rails when you slip off.

Your journey towards a more motivated approach to life starts as soon as you take the first step. Go on, do it now! And remember... nothing great was ever easy!!!

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