

Exercise Excuses and Rebuttals

Very few people exercise regularly and more than 50% of the people who start an exercise program don't make it through the first 3 months. Has this happened to you? Do you feel the need to exercise, but something is holding you back? Being healthy and consistent with exercise can be tough. However, if looked at realistically, every excuse, setback or mistake is simply a chance to learn. Planning for the future and accomplishing your goals starts with the present. If you're inactive or feel like your exercise consistency is sliding, apply the following rebuttals to your thoughts or excuses:

"I'm too tired." Unless you are incredibly sleep deprived, there is no reason not to exercise when you're tired.

- 10 minutes of brisk walking can give you up to two hours of increased energy
- Avoid going too long in between meals — you could be depleting your energy
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Make sure your fatigue is not from overexerting during your workouts
- Morning exercisers are more likely to stick to a fitness regimen

"I'm too busy." You may feel too weighed down with work, family and other commitments to fit in exercise — but a little sweat can make you more productive.

- Do shorter workout bursts
- Exercise decreases stress and gives you a clearer head and better perspective
- Get away from all-or-nothing thinking
- Prioritize exercise — find the time
- Work exercise into your workday

"I'll never look like Jennifer Lopez, so why bother?" Set goals that are challenging, but attainable — then focus on how you will achieve them.

- Avoid comparisons to others
- Don't look for things that can sabotage your workouts

"I feel as if I'm getting sick." Feeling under the weather does not have to keep you from exercise.

- Do not exercise if you have a fever
- Make sure to drink plenty of fluids and decrease intensity
- Research has shown that exercising with a cold is not harmful — there is no difference in the cold's duration or severity compared to those who did not exercise

"I'm too sore from yesterday's workout." Light exercise the day following an intense workout may help you recover faster.

- Be aware of localized pain, swelling or severe tenderness — these may represent an injury
- Consider soreness a sign of progress — not an obstacle
- Studies show that those who engaged in light exercise the day after a strenuous workout experienced less soreness than those who didn't

"I'm bored with my workout." Boredom is the major reason people give up on exercise.

- Bottom line: It is up to YOU to keep it interesting
- Experiment with new activities — join a class, get a new video, try a new piece of equipment at the gym, vary intensity, do an activity outdoors, play more
- Try something new — frequently changing your routine is the best way to stick to an exercise program

"I'm too stressed." Instead of adding tension to your life, regular exercise can reduce it.

- Exercise can buffer stress — act as a distraction
- Exercise gives us a sense of control over our lives — can raise self-esteem, give us a sense of accomplishment and makes us feel more capable to deal with other stressors
- The calming effects of exercise can last up to five hours
- When faced with nerve racking situations, regular exercisers are less likely to experience chest or joint pain, anxiety or depression

"I'm not in the mood." A good workout can improve your mood almost instantly.

- Exercise causes several biochemical changes in the body, including a rush of endorphins to areas of the brain that control emotion and behavior (runners high)
- Exercise causes you to breathe more deeply, delivering stimulating oxygen to both your mind and body, resulting in an elevation of mood
- Find motivation with a workout buddy
- Try working out with some of your favorite music

You can have excuses or you can have results. But you can't have both! As always, be sure to consult a doctor before starting any exercise program.