

The First Step

By Lisa Radke | Tribune Media Services

A workout buddy or personal trainer can help motivate you

Supplements. Gadgets. Clothing. Celebrity endorsements. Even hypnosis. These are just a few marketing strategies used to motivate lethargic individuals into working out. But for many, such products rarely provide more than a few days or weeks of amusement before they fall by the wayside.

Getting fit requires patience, determination and, most of all, motivation to do so. Often, psychological barriers prohibit people from getting properly motivated to workout on a regular basis.

“Getting motivated is about rearranging priorities,” explains Kevin Gianni, personal trainer and author of “The Busy Person’s Exercise Solution” (Lifestyle Fitness Press, \$45). “Your drive to work out will only be strong if it is massively important to you. If the program you’re on isn’t a 10, then you might as well do something else, because you’ll never stick to the plan.”

However, improving your workout routine to the best it can be may require some soul-searching. Finding a reason for working out, whether it’s for your kids, your partner or just to stay healthy, is the key, he says.

“A goal-setting program is essential to fitness success, but that doesn’t mean just deciding that you’ll lose 5 pounds in two weeks,” says Gianni. “It means that you need to look deeper into yourself and decide why you’re working

out and what benefits you will get from the activity. I’ve worked with enough clients to know that just deciding to lose weight doesn’t cut it. What personally will get you psyched to get up in the morning and get you moving?”

Whatever your motivation, experts agree that finding a workout buddy — someone you meet at the gym and exercise with — will help you stay committed to your regime.

“A lot of people try to work out until they’re so tired and sore they don’t want to ever come back,” explains Dr. Michael Maina, assistant professor of health and human development at Roanoke College in Salem, Va. “We’re taught ‘no pain, no gain,’ but that doesn’t really work. You should be having fun. You should leave thinking you can do more and want to go back.”

Maina adds that you don’t have to be limited to a treadmill or weights. There are numerous activities that qualify as working out — as long as the activity requires total body movement for at least 20 minutes, he says.

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“Too many people think of working out as a punishment rather than a reward.”

punishment rather than a reward,” Maina says. “Find activities you enjoy and do it because you like it, not because you have to.”

If you’re new to the fitness realm, you’re certainly not alone, but you also may not be familiar with fun alternatives to aerobic staples. For many, turning to a personal trainer is the answer. Most gyms offer them as part of a fitness package or for an additional fee.

Experts agree you should find a trainer — or even just a workout buddy — who understands that fitness isn’t just about lifting weights.

Sean E. Chillemi, a certified holistic health counselor, says to get fit, it’s important to look at all aspects of your life. And the same goes for your trainer if you choose to have one.

“Being a holistic health counselor provides the ability to understand the clients as an individual from the inside out; not just a physical perspective, but from an emotional and spiritual point of view,” he explains.

“To understand someone and all aspects of their life will truly allow for much greater growth as an individual and provide lasting changes and a happier, healthier lifestyle.” ♦

Fitness trainers and partners help you stay committed to your regime.



Fitness isn’t just about lifting weights, it’s about having fun.

Bored stiff?

Daily fitness regimens can easily become redundant and tiresome. That’s why Denise Cazes, visiting lecturer and coordinator of the Fitness Zone at the University of Houston — Clear Lake, advises athletes to change up your routine every once in awhile.

“Many of us get into a rut and think we have to do the same thing over and over again,” she explains. “You don’t have to just run — you can bike, roller blade, swim or hit a tennis ball against the wall. As long as your heart rate is in the target range and you are putting in your time, you’re getting the job done.”

Strength training can also bring some dull days. When this happens, Cazes suggests integrating some functional training instead of just using weights.

“Push-ups can be a very challenging way to work our pecs and arms even if you’ve been doing the bench press for a while,” she adds. “It just works the muscles in a different way and challenges you mentally as well. Doing lunges with a medicine ball or plyometric exercises can add a new dimension to your strength training routine.” ♦

FITNESS

Everyday tuning

By Amy Bertrand | St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Training for agility isn’t just for athletes

Although agility — the ability to change speed and direction quickly while maintaining control of the body — is vital to sports such as basketball, soccer and even swimming, it also plays a role in everyday life, more than you may think.

Consider the mom toting one kid on her hip while she lunges to catch another child running in front of the swing.

Or think about the waiter who has to balance a heavy tray on his hand while dodging the customer leaping up from her seat.

Then there’s the shopper reaching for a product high on the shelves while moving her cart out of the aisle for the hurried shopper passing through.

All of these instances require agility — quickness of action while maintaining balance.

“It’s kind of an odd concept,” says Meghan Forgy, a sports performance trainer at Vetta Sports and Fitness Hampshire in St. Louis, “but most of us use it in everyday life. No matter what you do, you often have to transfer speed or direction quickly at some time.”

Keath Hausher, trainer and owner of Shark Fitness, a St. Louis-area

boot-camp training company, agrees.

“If you think about it, the movement we do is not robotic. We don’t step forward and then turn in perfectly 90-degree angles with our arms stretched forward. We move at angles with our upper body doing one thing and our lower body doing another thing. That’s where functional training — agility training — comes into play.”

One of the keys to agility is multidirectional movement, so when training his boot-camp athletes, Hausher makes sure they incorporate forward, backward, side-to-side and even vertical movements, changing directions quickly.

“We’ll run quickly in reverse up a hill or do side lunges up a hill, which are great for the hip muscles. Above all else we stress form. In agility drills it’s important to keep hips, knees and ankles in perfect alignment.”

He says having good core strength is essential to having good agility. So, even with the cadets he trains at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., he starts there: “You have



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St. Louis Police Department Sgt. Marilyn Mullen is shown in a photo illustration going through the various challenges of a fitness test she must pass.

to start in the middle.”

Even little kids practice agility in running around in a circle, then someone yells “switch” and they change directions.

Ashley Stanley is a therapist and trainer.

As with other components of fitness, your agility decreases as you age, but Stanley says that’s no reason to give up on it.

“If you stop, you lose a little every year,” she says. “But if you just take the time to get back into it, you’ll do it after awhile.”

Stanley created a four-pronged plan while training St. Louis police Sgt. Marilyn Mullen that you could adapt for yourself.

Even if you are a senior with limited movement, try shuffling from side to side, holding on

to something if necessary.

“We do this in physical therapy,” says Forgy. “A lot of times, that’s what rehab programs are about — preventing falls. It doesn’t have to mean doing sprints.”

More advanced athletes can try what Stanley calls “Z’s.” In those exercises you run the shape of a Z, slowing slightly to make the turns, but still keeping up your speed as much as possible.

She also suggests running backward. ♦

Benefits of agility training

• **Quickness of action in an emergency:** If you have to react quickly to a dangerous situation, you have the physical ability to do so.

• **Muscle strength:** In agility training you work muscles you may have never worked before. And because agility training uses a lot of balance, your core muscles are especially strengthened.

• **Better overall fitness:** Agility training makes you more flexible, stronger and improves your cardiovascular health.

• **Better balance to prevent falls:** As you get older, your agility diminishes. Being able to keep your balance helps prevent falls. ♦

