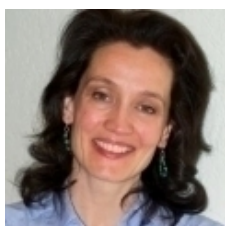


# Don't make exercise more painful than it has to be

By Mandy Kendall

As the days get longer, thoughts might be turning toward coming out of hibernation and getting out and about for a bit more exercise.

I think most of us know why we should be exercising. We know it's good for us: it builds muscle and reduces fat, it strengthens bones, it boosts our energy, combats depression and generally makes us feel good about ourselves. So what is it about exercise that can make it seem like such a chore?



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I'm not the most energetic of people and I often find it very easy to come up with plenty of excuses not to exercise on a regular basis. So I wondered if there might be a few changes I could make to my attitude about exercise that might help change that.

How do we exercise? For a lot of us an exercise routine is easy, but boring. Then the body stops responding to exercise the way it used to and we get discouraged.

Why do we exercise? For some of us it might be to change the way we look. So we exercise and we change the way we look, then what? We've reached our goal and then there's no more

incentive to keep us exercising.

When do we exercise? Who has time to exercise really? We rush off and try to cram in some exercise like another chore, when we have a gazillion other things we should/would rather be doing, and we may end up resenting it for taking up our valuable time.

So, here are a few *Qwik-e* (quick and easy) tips to putting some fun back into exercise:

**Have some fun!** – Mix things up a bit and try a new class or sport; it will challenge areas of your body (and brain) that might have been missed with your regular routine. Most places will let you try a couple of sessions, to see if you like it, before signing up for a whole class. Also, switching between exercise that challenges your breathing and exercise that challenges your muscles helps prevent your body from plateauing in improvement and staves off boredom.

**Make it social** – Working out with friends and family solves the problem of never having enough time to spend with loved ones and exercise too. It will also help to keep you motivated to exercise on a regular basis.

**Multitask** – If you find it difficult to allocate a whole hour or more to exercise, try and incorporate movement throughout your day. A few minutes here, a few movements there will make a big difference over time. Lunges and stretches while cleaning the house, or doing chores, may feel a little silly but will make the most of your time. Cycling on a stationary bike or doing weights watching your favorite show will make the time fly by (and will probably take your mind off sitting and eating those cookies too). I have a friend that even does squats while she's cleaning her teeth.

**Set a goal** – I'm better when I have a target to work toward. So whatever works for you; setting a distance to run, a standard or level to achieve or a competition to win. Often

just some good-natured competition with a friend is enough incentive to keep you focused. When you reach that goal then just set a new one. Weight loss is not the best goal to work towards because once we reach our ultimate goal weight then where do we go? We can't keep getting thinner, but we can always strive for a better time, longer distance or higher level. Just try and make sure that each goal is realistic and achievable in the near future so you don't run the risk of being discouraged.

Until next time.

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