

Being mindful – one way to jump-start exercise routine

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

By now, many of us, beset by bad weather and declining motivation, are struggling to maintain our New Year's exercise resolutions. But a timely new study offers encouragement, suggesting that by paying more attention to the experience of exercise itself, even the most reluctant of exercisers might begin to find pleasure in movement.

Scientists, like the rest of us, have long wondered why some people stick with exercise and others do not. The possible explanations involve everything from genetics and personality to practicalities like work schedules and access to showers. But in multiple studies of exercise behavior, one of the most reliable indicators of whether people will continue to exercise is that they find exercise satisfying. They gain enjoyment from being active.

The problem with that finding is that it does not explain what makes exercise satisfying and so is not very helpful on a practical level. Simply advising unenthusiastic exercisers to start enjoying their workouts more seems unlikely to have the desired effect.

So for the new study, which was published last month in *The Journal of Health Psychology*, researchers at Utrecht University in the Netherlands and other institutions recently decided to more closely parse the psychological underpinnings of exercise satisfaction, hoping to tease out what makes exercise feel pleasurable to some and like drudgery to others.

They wondered in particular about the role of mindfulness.

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