



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – KEEPING MOTVATED

No matter how high your aspirations to be physically active, the benefits of activity can not be gained if intentions are not turned into action. Motivation is the key, though the question remains, ‘how is it possible to stay motivated?’

If you are finding it difficult to motivate yourself to be active, and to stay motivated, try some of the following helpful suggestions.

1. **Find a buddy.** It’s always great to exercise in the company of a friend. By exercising together you can support and encourage one another to keep moving and to keep activity regular.
2. **Join a club.** It may be easier and more convenient for some to slot into the timetable of a sports club or gym close to home or work.
3. **Seek out** a personal trainer or find out about a local fitness group.
4. **Compete against yourself.** A number of products on the market today can help you maintain and even beat your personal best. Training watches can help you ensure that you are exercising at a level that maintains your heart rate at the most appropriate level for your training goals. Electronic pedometers can be used to monitor the number of steps you take on your daily walk or run. If you enjoy cycling, small computers can be mounted onto the handlebars of your bike to measure and calculate all sorts of physiological indicators for you to monitor and improve on.
5. **Use your headphones.** Research has shown that people who use headphones when walking walk further than those who do not! But forget the statistics, try it for yourself. Listen to the radio, your own music mix, or even your homework. If you use a stationary bike or walker, you could even try keeping the TV on in your exercise room. Remember to be extra alert when walking near busy roads – with headphones on your may not be able to hear cars approaching, so keep your eyes wide open and always look before crossing the road.
6. **Train for a competition.** Community events and competitions are carried out throughout the year, and can be used to set targets with regard to personal fitness. These events often aim to raise community awareness about specific issues, and by participating you can support an important cause whilst improving your health. Plus, it’s always motivating to see other people out exercising together.
7. **Be creative.** Repeating the same exercises over and over can get a little boring, but you may be able to keep yourself motivated by shaking up your exercise routine. Variety is the key! Engaging in different exercises increases the number of different muscles used and is more mentally refreshing. You could also be active with different friends – chose one for walking, one for swimming and another for tennis!

8. Record your progress. Get yourself a notebook or calendar and record the type and length activity completed each time you exercise. Monitoring your frequency of activity as well as your achievements can really help you stay motivated.

9. Read Success Stories. Fitness books, magazines and websites that tell stories similar to your own can be a great source of encouragement and can remind you that you not alone in your plight. Many people struggle to keep motivated when it comes to exercise, and reading about how others have overcome this challenge could give you some useful ideas that may help you overcome your own barriers.

10. Don't push yourself too hard or feel guilty. If you push yourself too hard day after day you will get tired and sore and lose motivation very quickly. It's important to moderate your exercise and vary the intensity and type of exercise you do. Don't feel guilty if you have slipped out of routine for a few days. Just move on and start again.

And remember, the important thing is to keep moving regularly to gain the greatest health benefits.

NOW THAT'S ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU MOVING!