

'Every excuse in the book'

Overcome the roadblocks to exercise

Were two months into the new year when inevitably we start to slack off on our New Year's resolutions. Exercise is almost always on our resolution list and usually the first to lose momentum.

Most of us don't skip exercise because we don't care about our health. We struggle because there are so many roadblocks. Sometimes those roadblocks are legitimate, but often they fall into the category of excuses.

In her book *"Every Excuse in the Book."* Jeanne Murdock addresses every excuse you can imagine as a roadblock to exercise. Her book is packed with information on exercise and practical tips for getting into a solid routine. When it's time to exercise and you don't feel like it, simply find your excuse in the book and follow the advice she suggests.

Having Murdock's book as a resource is like working with a fitness coach who won't let you slack off. The most common excuse seems to be lack of time. Work, family, household responsibilities and over-commitment press upon us and rob us of time we need to take care of ourselves.

To overcome the lack of time, excuse experts suggest making a list of activities you must do every day, and a list of things you want to do and then numbering them according to their importance. It goes without saying that exercise is on the must do list. To make exercise a must do, you may have to spend less time doing things you want to do, like watching television, reading the newspaper, or cleaning the bathroom.

From my point of view, except for meal preparation and laundry, most household activities can either go on the want to do list or can be delegated to others. After all, which would you really prefer; a clean bathroom or better fitting jeans? If exercise has not made it on your must do list consider scheduling time in your day-timer as if it were an appointment you made. When you make an appointment with someone else you generally do everything you can to keep it. The difference is this is an appointment you made with yourself. Shouldn't your commitment to yourself be as important as those you make to others?

Most experts agree that we need 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity activity every day to get the benefits of exercise. A well-rounded exercise routine includes:

- 30 to 45 minutes of aerobic activity daily.
- 30 minutes of strength training two or three times a week.
- 30 minutes of flexibility and balance training two or three times a week.

This might seem like a lot to most

people, but thirty minutes can be broken down into two 15-minute segments. Even 15-minute bursts of exercise can get you heart rate up, can stretch and strengthen muscles and go a long way toward improving your health. A recent study from the University of Cambridge showed that even people who exercise for less than 30 minutes a day can reduce their risk of dying from any cause by 20 percent, compared with those who don't exercise at all.

Fifteen-minute workouts can be done on an exercise ball, with a yoga workout, or brisk walk.

Sit down right now, and make a list of your must do and want to do activities and see where exercise fits in. Most of us are going to live into our 70s or mid -80s.

The question to ask yourself is do I want to live those years immobile and dependent upon medication, procedures, and frequent visits to the doctor or do I want to be healthy, active, and independent? Research shows that regular exercise can add an extra 10 to 20 years of high quality life.



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