

Breaking Through To Fitness

Let's face it. Most of us know we should exercise. But we often get overwhelmed by the many reasons not to exercise. The challenge is to deal with our reasoning. If we could change the way we think about exercise, maybe we would actually do it.

This is much easier said than done because our mental habits are difficult to break. I say, "exercise," and you say, "time, pain, sweat, ugh!" So what's it going to take to change these associations? You literally have to break through to a new way of thinking about exercise, which depends on seeing it from a new perspective.

What's the biggest problem when it comes to exercising regularly? Most people say it's time. Or the lack of it. "We're over-committed at work and in our personal lives. So how can we possibly take the time to exercise on a daily basis? It's a matter of priorities. There are so many people depending on us that we can't possibly take care of ourselves, even though we know we should." Herein lies the primary fallacy in our thinking about time and commitment.

It's the reasoning that puts our boss and family before our personal needs. (And by the way, it's easy to rationalize this set of priorities when you don't like to exercise in the first place.) Think about this for a minute: how long and how effectively can you continue to serve your boss and family if you don't exercise? If you don't eat well, sleep enough, and maintain your physical strength? This is the crux of the matter. You simply owe it to others who depend on you to be fit for life.

Even if it seems that lots of coffee, fast food and long hours are working for you, an honest assessment tells another story. You are stressed out, over-weight and losing your ability to maintain the pace. It's tough to admit, but you aren't the young and energetic specimen you once were. Maybe you can hang in there for a few more years, or maybe a few after that. But sooner or later you'll have to deal with the results of your sedentary lifestyle—the way you choose to live while you put other people ahead of your basic fitness needs.

You absolutely must take care of yourself now, or later someone else will be taking care of you. And it won't be pretty, especially if you have heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's or any of the diseases associated with sedentary living. You may wish for a quick end to life so as not to burden other people, and these days many in their fifties and early sixties are getting their wish. Cynics say that the amount of time we gain by exercising is off-set by the time we lose by exercising. That may be true, but it overlooks the quality of life issue.

Human beings were meant to exercise. From the evolutionary perspective, we've been hunters and gatherers much longer than we've been office workers. Movement is natural, even enjoyable. Otherwise the human ability to walk great distances would have been deselected long ago. Now-a-days we must contrive ways to exercise. Then, moving around to gather fire wood, nuts and berries was simply part of living.

I spend most of my day in front of a computer or riding around doing errands on a motorcycle. It feels great to take a jog in the early evening, to take a shower afterwards, and to eat a nutritious meal. I wouldn't trade that forty minutes of exercise for anything. Afterwards I feel relaxed, refreshed and ready for the rest of the evening.

I also feel that I'm living in harmony with my natural physical being. We absolutely cannot neglect our physical being. We must strive for physical and spiritual balance. Others are depending on us.