



Poor Fitness Excuses Exposed

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You know your physical fitness is important, yet you struggle to find time for regular exercise. You know your diet is important, yet you can't resist fast food or unhealthy snacks. There is little more important to you than your health, but you do little to improve it. If this is you, you have many companions. Studies find that for two out of three adults, this is their daily battle.

What is preventing you or those you care about from establishing and sustaining healthy lifestyle habits? Is it limited time? Indifference? Lack of perceived value? Listed below are the excuses I hear most often and my rebuttal for each. Pick the one you use or hear most often. I hope you will discover that the excuse makes little sense and it's time to make health and fitness your top priority.

Excuses and Rebuttals:

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“Being out of shape isn't really that bad” – Just because you don't think your poor fitness is a problem doesn't change the reality that it is. Not only is a lack of exercise and poor nutrition going to haunt you when you become older, it hurts you now. Your poor conditioning impacts your mental acuity, your energy level, and your physical appearance—you just don't realize it. Your brain receives less oxygen and your body fewer life improving hormones. Your body has to work harder to carry around your excess weight. You are less attractive and less likely to attract the people you might like to attract. Accept it or not, when you are out of shape, it impacts you physically, mentally, socially, and professionally.

“I'm too busy to exercise” – Yes you are busy, probably very busy, but you have the same twenty-four hours a day that others have who do exercise. It is not a lack of time but how you choose to spend your time that is the real issue. There is always time if you choose to make your health a high enough priority. Realize that the time you spend exercising and making healthy food choices is more than offset by the improved productivity you gain the rest of the day from increased energy and mental acuity. Consider too that you might need to start saying “no” to some people, quit spending time on lower priority activities, delegate some of your responsibilities, or become more productive at what you do.

“I'm too tired” – Could it be that your very lack of physical conditioning or poor health is causing you to have limited energy? Most medical experts would say it is. Or is it that you give everything you have all day long to everyone else and have no energy left to invest in yourself? If so, realize that while your workload might serve a noble cause, if you don't give yourself the proper rest, nutrition, and exercise your body needs, your ability to help others and get work done is limited. Consider your lack of energy a wake-up call for change. Heart attacks, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol are not badges of honor.

“I don't like to exercise” or “I like what I eat” – If you choose to merely do that which you enjoy, at least appreciate the consequences so you won't feel like a complete fool later. Realize that as you indulge in your poor lifestyle choices that you are creating a debt that you'll have to repay later. Your short-term pleasures and gratifications will become your displeasures and regrets in the future. Just because “someday” may seem a long way off right now doesn't mean it won't come and you won't have to confront it. Consider that most anything of value, including your health has a cost. Small sacrifices in what you eat and how you spend your time are worth making. Not always being comfortable may be just what you truly need.

“I can't resist the temptation” – There is no denying that your mind and body make change very difficult. Physical cravings and mental thought processes are powerful. There are many approaches, however, you can use to counter them. For example, you can remove yourself from temptation laden situations, remove the temptations from your surroundings, and have contingency plans in place for the occasions when you do encounter them. As you incrementally overcome your undesirable desires and discover that you can control yourself, your confidence goes up and your ability to maintain your willpower becomes stronger and stronger.



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“It’s too late” – You may be in extremely poor health and exceedingly out of shape, but it’s never too late to benefit from good nutrition and exercise. What you do for your body today has an immediate impact. Studies find that just a little exercise immediately improves blood circulation and alters your physiology in a number of beneficial ways. Just one day of good nutrition improves your immunity to disease and infection. Just one day of replacing starches and sugar with leafy vegetables and fiber improves digestion, reduces headaches, and improves vitality. Unless you don’t plan to live past today, it isn’t too late to enjoy the benefits of a better lifestyle.

“I’ve tried before and just can’t stay with it” – Habits are powerful, yet they can be changed. People do quit smoking. People do lose weight and keep it off. People do start running and get just as addicted to it as they do watching television. No one is born a junk food addict or tobacco user. Habits are learned behaviors and can be unlearned. It takes discipline and persistence, but you can change. Forming new habits requires that you stay with them long enough that they become natural. Your new diet and exercise routine then simply become your normal lifestyle. Yes, you must permanently give up some things, but you can and believe it or not—you will eventually even enjoy it.

“I’ll make a change, just not now” – You might intend to change, even soon, but days turn into weeks which turn into months and then years. Before you know it, you’ve ignored healthy lifestyle choices for five, ten, or more years. The reality is that if you need to make a change, you need to make it now—not tomorrow or next week. Decide to put time on your side instead of against you. Every day you wait to improve your fitness is another day of added cholesterol and weight gain that you have to undo. It’s another day that your muscles atrophy, your lung capacity decreases, your memory fades, and your cognitive ability decreases.

“I just can’t seem to get started” – Start by deciding to start. Set goals for yourself. For each, determine the time, resources, and assistance you need to reach them. Create a plan of what you will start doing as well as stop doing. Recruit others in your family, neighborhood, or work to join you. Create contingency plans for the temptations and obstacles you will likely encounter. If you know you’ll be starving in the afternoon, take a bag of nuts with you to work. If you know you can’t resist a candy bar or desert, bring a piece of dark chocolate with you. If you know someone will likely call a meeting in the morning when you had planned to be in the gym, establish a home workout routine that you can do.

Once you get started, take it one day at a time. Don’t worry about tomorrow or reaching your goal. Just do today what you need to do today. At the end of the day, review how well you did. Score yourself in a journal to track your progress. When tomorrow comes, do it over again. Then again and again each day afterwards. Before you know it, you’ll be in great shape, full of energy, mentally acute, and enjoying life like you never have before. Let there be no more excuses!

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