

**TAKE  
CONTROL  
OF YOUR  
HEALTH**

# The "I Hate To Exercise" Success Plan

Some people can spring out of bed at the crack of dawn and slip right into a pair of sneakers without stopping for coffee. Maybe you're not one of them. But even people who profess to hate working out can come to truly enjoy exercise and reap the health benefits. The first step is to choose an activity you love. Here are four ways you can learn to like your workout:

**Set small goals.** Deciding to run a marathon if you've never so much as walked half a mile—or to lose 50 pounds in only two months—is setting yourself up for the type of failure that will only make you want to give up. Instead, set small, realistic goals, such as: "I will take a 20-minute walk three days this week," or, "I will lose two pounds." The sense of success you get when you achieve these more-attainable milestones will rev up your motivation.

**Turn envy into motivation.** Most of us have watched a friend suddenly get fit or lose weight and have felt a certain envy. Or perhaps you look at other, fitter people and think it must be easy for them. Instead of feeling hopelessly discouraged, switch your mindset and use your friend's success to motivate yourself. Remind yourself: "If she can do it, I can too. I may be a

little behind, but my friend is proof it's possible." Cheering a buddy's success can help you on the way to your own.

**Nix negative self-talk.** It's really tempting to get down on yourself, especially at the beginning of an exercise program. You know the drill: "I can't believe I let myself go. I hate my body."

This kind of negative thinking is enough to make anyone stay in bed. While you're working out, concentrate instead on what your body *can* do. Every time you start to feel a negative thought coming on, consciously replace it with an affirmation: "It feels so good to stretch," or, "I'm getting stronger every day."

**End on a high note.** Many exercisers report that when they make the last few minutes of their workout relaxing and pleasurable, they find themselves more likely to go back. If you finish your routine with a series of grueling push-ups, you're likely to remember the pain. Instead, end your workout with a calming stretch while listening to your favorite song. When your mind conjures up exercise, it will recall the pleasant feeling you ended with—and feeling good about your body and yourself is the best incentive.

—Michael O'Shea

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