

14 Tips for Starting and Sticking With It

. Stop Failure Before it Starts

-- By Julie Isphording, former Olympian

For some of us out there, if we could just convince ourselves that there is enough time in the day to exercise, we could be on track to a great fitness program. For others, we get started but quickly lose momentum and give up. To help get started and stay on track, here are a few tips:

- . **Throw away** the bathing suit you wore in high school... and the memory too. It's normal to have a mental image of yourself when you last exercised like a fiend. But if that image is from high school, you could be in big trouble. Even if it's from last year, forget it. Remember as little as possible of what you used to look like. Starting today, make new memories.
- . **Prepare.** We already know you don't have the time, so write it down like an appointment every day. You wouldn't cancel an appointment, why would you cancel on yourself? Aren't you important too?
- . **Start slowly.** Do much less than what you're capable of. Take a 20-minute walk if you're returning to exercise. You might feel like it's not enough, but it's a good start.
- . **Get the family involved.** Run while your daughter rides her bike. Go to a local track and let the kids play their own games. Run with your spouse. Sign up for a local 10K. Walk with your son. Celebrate with a little something special after every activity.
- . **Where are your friends?** Four words, four reasons – motivation, inspiration, determination, conversation. Surround yourself with friends who think positive and live large.
- . **Put the pain in perspective.** When the going gets tough, remember that you have survived 600 carpools, 540 loads of laundry (this month), 41 baseball games, 230 dinners and one family vacation. What's the big deal?
- . **Allow yourself to slow down.** You're driving this bus! For the first time today, you are in control.
- . **Sign up for a race.** It's a goal to strive for and adds a little meaning to your everyday workout.

- . **Run/walk in public.** Be proud of your accomplishment. Take in all the sites and be an inspiration to others.
- . **Just show up.** Go to the gym, class, or the park. Once you're there, it's hard to say no. 98% of life is showing up.
- . **Eat.** Follow a healthy eating pattern. If you limit your calorie intake, you will not have enough energy to work out and your metabolism will slow down.
- . **Understand your energy cycle.** There are peaks during our days. Even during the week. Try to complete your workout when you feel good about yourself.
- . **Wallow in your greatness.** You can exercise to become a better exerciser, or you can exercise to become a better mother, a better father, doctor, teacher, or a better friend – or you can exercise to become BETTER. Be proud of that accomplishment.
- . **Have fun.** Where's your childlike spirit? When you can make workouts "payouts," you've got it made.

Don't give up on yourself. After all, it's never too late to be that healthy person you might have been.