

## What's Your Exercise Excuse?

.....It had better not be one of those listed below!

After 'much ado about nothing', I have come to the conclusion that 'no matter your exercise excuse, there is an even more compelling reason to exercise'.

I definitely agree that there may be a handful of conditions that may require us to take a break from exercising, but even then, in the right hands, there is something that may just be right for us.

Ladies and gentlemen, behold the all-time 'favourite' exercise excuses:

### 1. "I DON'T HAVE TIME"

You definitely are not alone. We all think we are extremely busy, but we do make time for other things, don't we? It's all a matter of setting our priorities right. Fortunately for us, we all have exactly 24 hours in a day, and we just have to make do with that. The wise one above knows best and set it that way.

The good news is that exercise gives you energy. It does not take it away, so you will be able to do more in less time. Here's a great tip: if you have trouble managing your time, you may do well to start exercising - NOW!

### 2. "I AM TOO TIRED"

We often spread out on our sofa and proclaim to the world and anyone who cares to listen, "I am so tired, I need to get some rest. This relaxation time is all I can squeeze into my hectic day. One day when I get enough rest, I will start exercising". Does that sound like any of us?

The good news is this: research has shown that aerobic/cardiovascular exercise increases energy and relieves fatigue. So next time you feel so tired it may be a great option to take a brisk walk or hit the gym.

Exercising will definitely give us more energy so we can do more of the things we love – that is good bait, isn't it?

### 3. "I HATE EXERCISE"

Most of the time, we just hate what we think exercise has to be. The bottom line is that you need to move a large group of muscles over a period of time, and also get your precious heart to do some extra work. If you do not like the word 'exercise', let's use 'physical activity' (exercise is actually a branch or subset of physical activity). That probably makes you more comfortable. Physical activity includes gardening, household

chores, dancing, etc. The point here is that we should do more of what we enjoy, and that will help to keep us on track.

Always make healthy choices such as using the stairs instead of the elevator; parking your car further away from your destination; walking to the neighbourhood shop; moving around while on the phone; walking to a work colleague's desk instead of emailing or using the phone; and the greatest of all - walking to the TV to use the controls instead of the remote. So after all, exercising is not that bad!

4. **“I AM TOO OLD”**

No matter your age and physical condition, there is a form of exercise that is appropriate for you. You only need to talk to your healthcare professional, and you will be on your way to discovering the secrets of a healthy old age. Please note: starting to exercise at mid-life lengthens your lifespan.

5. **“I AM IN TOO MUCH PAIN”**

I can feel your pain too. Many of us have extremely painful body parts, such as the knees, and we find it almost impossible to even walk. The sad part of the equation is that the pain worsens when we avoid all forms of physical activity. Many people will experience extreme pain when we start walking, but it improves over time. You could walk for as little as 30 seconds, take a break and then continue. Some may be better off on a recumbent bike, and others, in a pool of water. If you do not know the cause of your pain, talk to a healthcare professional, who, together with a fitness therapist, should be able to work out a plan for you.

.....AND NOW, MY TIPS FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON:

- **Get adequate rest**
  - Moving from one function to the other will make us tired and stressed out, leading us to make the wrong decisions: when we are tired, we drink more, eat more, and unfortunately do the least physical activity.
  
- **Watch what you eat**
  - This is the season for temptation. Before eating out, do eat healthy food at home, so that you only top up when you get to the function.
  - If you have the opportunity to dance, spend more time dancing instead of sitting to eat.
  - Use small plates.

- Drink lots of water – it reduces the food you eat, and, contrary to popular opinion, it aids digestion, so you can't get it wrong.
- **Forgive yourself if you slip**
  - If you happen to indulge over a day or two, do not beat yourself to death. It won't make much of a difference to your long term health goals... Just get back on track.
- **To my dear friends with lifestyle diseases**, unfortunately this is no time to throw caution to the wind. My dear diabetics, NO ALCOHOL, PLEASE! It may be a good idea not to spend the season in the emergency room. Hope you think so too.
- **Focus on the right things**
  - This season is all about God and not the food, drinks and parties. Maybe if we have things in the right perspective, we will not over-indulge.

Enjoy the season and remember to make healthy choices daily.

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