Exercise After 40

So, You Want to Get Fit
In This Presentation

- Picturing yourself healthy for a long time
- Shaping up your plan to shape up
- Finding your finest hour to get fit
One thing all of us can agree on about life in our forties and beyond is this: **We're busy.** Careers are in full bloom, the kids are more involved than ever with school and extracurricular activities, and we are always finding some new project to volunteer our time for.

Something has to give. In your schedule, the first task you eliminate to save time is your plan to exercise. Once you cross off exercise from your to-do list, you're left with three choices:

1. Play the martyr and pretend you don't really need to exercise.
2. Figure there's always tomorrow and that you'll get around to exercising next week, next month, or next year.
3. Try again to find ways to include much-needed exercise time in your over-scheduled life.
You can feel as fit as a fiddle -- like you did 20 years ago. That's right.

- Choosing to go through the rest of your days on earth without exercising means choosing a shortened life span and a lower quality of living.

- If you make the effort to trade your sedentary lifestyle for one that contains the crucial component -- physical activity -- there's no reason why you can't turn back the hands of your body clock.

- If you are in your early forties, you can feel as fit as you did when you were in your mid-twenties; if you are in your late fifties, there's no reason why you can't match the physical fitness you enjoyed on the first anniversary of your 39th birthday.

- No, you won't ever measure up to the fitness peak you enjoyed during your late adolescence, but you can reclaim lost years if you start exercising today.
Making Commitment Today

- You begin by making a commitment to start exercising regularly, at least five minutes a day. Yes, it’s only five minutes a day. That’s all the time that you need to dedicate to start.

- Then you can look at increasing your exercise to 15 minutes a day, followed by a half-hour.

- You do not need to exercise frantically every day, but you must devise an exercise plan and stick to it.
People stop working out because they don't see immediate results. Perhaps that mindset can be attributed to the fast-paced "gotta have it now" society we live in, where 56K dial-up modems are dismissed as dinosaur connections to the Internet. You are spoiled with the swift efficiency of everything from PCs to jet travel to microwave ovens.

But physical fitness doesn't work that way. Fitness takes patience and perseverance, energy and enthusiasm, as well as sacrifices and spontaneity.

Let this presentation inspire you to make specific changes in your lifestyle. Begin by sketching out a plan of action. Then act on that plan.
## Overcoming the Objections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excuse</th>
<th>Counterpoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's too early in the morning.</td>
<td>It's too early for what? Not for the birds. Get up earlier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just ate.</td>
<td>All the more reason to walk it off. After-dinner walks can be the best, especially with a family member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm too fat.</td>
<td>You'll weigh less if you keep exercising regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's too cold.</td>
<td>Dress warmly if you're walking or jogging outside. Most people work out at their homes or gyms, which are almost always heated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's too hot.</td>
<td>Exercise early or late in the day, or exercise indoors. I doubt you could find a fitness center without air conditioning in this day and age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like sitting.</td>
<td>The more you sit, the more you want to sit. Get going!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse</td>
<td>Counterpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm too tired.</td>
<td>Exercise will give you energy. You'll feel better when you're done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The treadmill hurts my knees.</td>
<td>Then ride a recumbent bike or swim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't have the right shoes.</td>
<td>Sneakers are inexpensive. Buy new ones. You don't have to spend $100.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's dark outside when I come home from work. I don't want to take a walk.</td>
<td>Wear some reflective materials and carry a flashlight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm afraid of dogs.</td>
<td>Carry an old golf club. No dog will attack a crazy, club-wielding exercise fanatic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It hurts to walk.</td>
<td>Does it hurt to go five steps or 10 steps? Start with five steps and increase to 10 steps tomorrow. By the end of the week, you might be up to 20 steps. In no time, you can walk a mile in your shoes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse</td>
<td>Counterpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd rather go out to eat at a restaurant.</td>
<td>Then park a mile or two from the restaurant and walk there. You'll work up a great appetite along the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm out of shape.</td>
<td>So? A thousand-mile journey begins with a single step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't leave the kids home alone.</td>
<td>Many gyms offer some form of child care. Pay a teenager a few dollars to watch your children. Swap babysitting with a friend. Say you'll watch her kids when she exercises or runs errands. You can also walk or jog and have the kids ride their bikes alongside. You can also push your toddler in a baby jogger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My husband won't join me.</td>
<td>Let him loaf. You can't let a reluctant exerciser affect your health. Setting a good example, however, may inspire him to join you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's something good on TV.</td>
<td>Then tape the show with your VCR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse</td>
<td>Counterpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have only 20 minutes.</td>
<td>Not only is that enough time, it's far better than doing nothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm on vacation.</td>
<td>What better time to exercise than when you have so much free time? Walking is a great travel pastime, especially if you're visiting the European crown cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate gardening.</td>
<td>Then you're missing out on a great form of exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love shopping.</td>
<td>Then make it a walking excursion!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can come up with more reasons not to exercise.</td>
<td>That still doesn't let you off the hook.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Setting Realistic Goals You Can Live With

- Starting your exercise program means setting realistic goals -- long-term and short-term benchmarks for things you want to accomplish in your life.

- Don't worry. You have plenty of years left to set long-term goals.
Short-term Goals

Short-term goals, when realistic, can motivate you to keep exercising for the long haul:

- Walk 30 minutes without stopping
- Walk one hour without stopping
- Lose ten pounds
- Wear older clothes that didn't fit
- Quit smoking
- Drink less alcohol
Long-term Goals

- Exercise consistently for the next 12 months
- Lose 25 pounds
- Lose 50 pounds
- Drop one or two dress sizes
- Wear size 34 pants again
- Run in a 10-kilometer race
- Lower your blood pressure
- Play in a father-son tennis tournament
- Hike to the top of any mountain
- Ski six straight days in Utah or somewhere else
- Go on a New England bicycle tour in the fall
Every Beginning is Hard…

Tips for your exercise program:

- Work out three days a week. Whether it's for five or 50 minutes, three days a week is your baseline.

- Add five to ten minutes to your thrice-a-week workouts during the first two weeks.

- Be at 30 minutes, three times a week, by the end of your third week.

- Maintain this exercise level for several months.

- Add a fourth day to your weekly exercise plan after you reach the six-month point, or anytime along the way.

- Try to exercise every day.
Try To Exercise Every Day

- Don't kid yourself. If you promise yourself that you are going to exercise two, three days a week, life has a way of erasing one of those days each week. If you make a commitment to exercise **every** day -- which could mean a 6 a.m. visit every morning to your fitness club, a 30-minute walk during your lunch break, riding a stationary bike after dinner, or strolling through a nearby park on the weekend -- you should have no problem exercising at least four days a week. In other words, if you shoot for seven days a week, you should be able to get in four or five exercise periods.
Exercise at Least 30 Minutes a Day

- Research has shown that working out once a week is like spinning your wheels in the mud -- you won't get anywhere. Some fitness gains are made when you exercise intensely twice a week. Thrice is nice: Three or four exercise sessions will greatly improve your fitness level. But five or six exercise periods move up your fitness level in ways that appear to be revolutionary. And more frequent workouts speed up fat loss. Keep that thought in mind if you're searching for inspiration.
Change Your Habits

- Because the general rule says that it takes 21 days to establish a new habit, you need to give yourself a chance to change things around. Write your exercise appointments in your daily calendar and dare yourself to scratch them out.
Finding the Right Time to Exercise

- While the early hours of the day are the preferred time (the best reason being that you can't cancel a workout that you've already finished), it's not the only time. The best time to exercise is **when it works for you**.

- Incorporating exercise into your **morning** schedule is better because the longer you go through the day without exercise, the easier it becomes to say, "I'm tired. **Manana.**"

- Because your body is capable of exercising at any hour, you can exercise any time of day (or night).
The body's core temperature is around 97 degrees. Your body's temperature naturally decreases as you sleep. Because your body's thermostat is set on low in the dawn's early hours, you probably don't feel like jumping out of bed and jumping rope for ten minutes. This low body temperature explains why some people do not even want to think about working out or performing any physical activity until they drink their second cup of coffee. Many folks rather enjoy the calming effect that the morning brings.

Early morning exercise may be the answer to your workday blahs and may make you feel better than any second cup of coffee.

Take a walk or visit the gym early one day, even if you're not a morning person. You may discover that you rather enjoy the circulation boost and endorphin rush you get from early morning fitness. Soon you may crave the feel-good sensation that early morning workouts give your body.
Keep Your a.m. Exercise Appointment

- **Call your exercise buddy the night before.** Nobody likes getting stood up, however, so a friendly phone call the evening before will be a reminder to both of you that tomorrow's the day!

- **Pack your exercise clothing ahead of time.** You avoid rushing to pack everything at the last minute if you get your clothes in order the night before. Arriving at the fitness gym only to realize that you forgot your sneakers or new underwear can be pretty frustrating.

- **Pack your breakfast and lunch the night before.** You should wait 90 minutes after a big meal before working out. So prepare to eat after your workout by packing your food the night before. (Morning exercisers should, however, eat a little something before their workout -- a piece of fruit or toast or some yogurt -- to jump-start their system.)

- **Set two alarms.** Setting a second alarm across the room means you actually have to get out of bed to turn the darn thing off. Then you're awake.
Shaping Up at Noon or The End of The Day

- **Work smart.** If you are in a leadership position, announce your intention to end the meeting in one hour (especially if it's an 11 a.m. meeting and you want to work out over lunchtime, or it's 4 p.m. and this is the last meeting of the day).

- **Try to arrive just a little before noon.** If you're able to exercise at a corporate fitness facility or a nearby health club, arriving five or ten minutes before the noon rush may be the difference between finding an empty treadmill or getting aced out. You can also get on your favorite strength-training machines without having to wait or bounce around to different machines.
Tips for 9-to-5 Exercisers

- If you're exercising right after work, make it work for you. The easiest time to cancel a physical activity is at the end of the workday. You're tired, stressed out, and worried about how much you have to do. You know that family activities and responsibilities are waiting for you at home. But if you can leave work on time, get your workout in, and arrive home in time for dinner, you're going to feel a lot better. You have to be disciplined to get your tasks done, keep that appointment you made with yourself (and your exercise buddy), and put something into your fitness time. Exercising gets easier each time you stay with the program, however.

- Finally, know that all is not lost if you don't exercise before dinner. Although not ideal, you can still exercise in the several hours between dinner and bedtime. A long walk with your partner, for instance, provides great fitness benefits and gives the two of you an opportunity to catch up and share how your day went.
Staying with Your Program

- Another important aspect of fitness is consistency. The way you develop consistency is by scheduling a set time to exercise. This step sounds so simple that an elementary-age child can follow it, but it is hard to bring consistency to our busy and always-changing lives.

- Think positively, reward yourself for exercising. A reward system makes exercise a positive experience.

- Turn negative self-talk around by thinking about the rewards of working out. Remind yourself of how good you feel about yourself.

- Keep in mind that you are paying yourself to keep your exercise appointments.

- Tell your spouse that both of you will dine at your favorite restaurant if you stay with your exercise program for one month. Or enjoy a long weekend out of town as a three-month reward.

- Exercise shouldn't be seen as a punishment or the price you have to pay for just living. Exercise should be a benefit to you.