

Balance with Grace

A monthly newsletter by Grace Durfee, personal coach

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We all know that exercise is good for us. It makes us look and feel better by giving us more energy, reducing stress, promoting good sleep, boosting our metabolism, and strengthening muscles and bones. It also reduces the risk of heart disease, cancer, and other degenerative diseases. So, if it isn't a regular habit of yours, read on for some ways to make working out work for you. And if you already exercise, you may get some ideas to rev up your routine.

CHOOSE TO MOVE

If finding time for and sticking to a schedule of regular exercise has frequently been a stumbling block for you, expand your notion of what counts for exercise. Don't feel that exercise has to be concentrated into one workout session. Seek opportunities to move your body more throughout the day, every day. This could mean parking further away from entrances, taking stairs instead of elevators or escalators, and using a headset so you can walk around while talking on the phone. If you have control over your office environment, you could swap your desk chair for an exercise ball that you frequently bounce on or stretch over, or tuck a rebounder or other piece of exercise equipment in the corner of your office to get your blood moving occasionally.

BE MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE WITH WORKOUTS

By far, the most common excuse I hear from clients is, "There's no time to exercise." The good news is that interval training is now thought to be a more effective way to get into shape, and to maintain or improve fitness levels. I'd always thought that workouts of a long duration and at a comfortable pace (slow enough to carry on a conversation) were the ideal way to exercise. My recent reading is turning that idea on its head, and I'm enjoying experimenting with more of a burst training approach. It's really changing the way I swim, for instance. I've always been slow and steady, but now, after a few warm up laps, I pretend that I'm in a race and go all out for a length or two, depending on the size of the pool. With interval training the intention is to aim for 30-60 seconds at maximum intensity followed by a recovery period of 1-2-minutes. After alternating these bursts of intensity and recovery for a total of 20-30 minutes you feel spent—in a good way! You can apply this approach to most activities: biking, running/walking, jumping rope, dancing, or using exercise equipment.

MIX IT UP

Cross-training works different muscle groups, prevents injuries from overuse, and adds interest to what otherwise might become a boring exercise routine. One of the reasons I belong to a health club is that I like a variety of activities. I have some of my favorite classes—Zumba, Caribbean Rhythm, yoga, and Pilates but I'll throw in a different class every now and then to mix it up. For instance, I tried Spinning for the first time a few weeks ago, and if they take my suggestion to offer an Intro to Body Pump class, I'll be there. If a health club is too expensive or inconvenient for you, check out exercise DVDs from your public library, or see what's available on TV or over the Internet. Experiment to find out what's fun and provides a healthy challenge for you.

PUT ON SOME WEIGHT

No, I'm not encouraging you to gain weight, unless you need to, rather I'm encouraging you to add or beef up strength training. I'd been doing a bit of weight training, I've always believed that more repetitions at a low weight was the best way to tone rather than bulk up, but I've learned that this approach won't help me reach my goal of lower body fat. Now that I've worked my way up to heavier weights and am concentrating on slower, more controlled repetitions, I'm feeling stronger every day. If you aren't a fan of weights, you can use your own body's resistance through exercise like the plank, push-up, lunges, and squats to get good results.

I hope you this has given you some ideas for ways to introduce, recommit to, or reinvigorate exercise as a healthy habit.

To your health!

Resources

www.cedardale-health.net I've been a loyal member of this health club for over 15 years.

<http://www.zumba.com/>

Power of 10: the Once-A-Week Slow Motion Fitness Revolution, by Adam Zickerman

Outsmarting the Midlife Fat Cell: Winning Weight Control Strategies for Women Over 35 to Stay Fit Through Menopausal, by Debra Waterhouse

Upcoming Programs and Events

Mentor Coaching Group

We meet via tele-conference three Tuesdays a month for Business development, personal development, and coaching skill development

Fee: \$200 a month

Register soon to secure your spot. Group size is limited to 6.

Coaching with Reiki I Training

Two 90-minute teleclasses

Wednesdays, May 2 and 23

12:00-1:30 p.m. Eastern

Pricing: \$90

Coaching with Reiki II Training

Two 90-minute teleclasses

Wednesdays, May 16 and June 13

12:00-1:30 p.m. Eastern

Pricing: \$90

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