



Winter Fitness

If you feel like you're operating on half-power during these cold winter months, there's something you can do to make exercise more appealing. Moving your workouts inside can be a hard transition, but if you take some time to plan more interesting workouts, it doesn't have to be another blah winter.

Spice Up Your Cardio

The cold weather often makes outdoor exercise miserable, if not impossible. If you've headed indoors and found yourself bored to tears on gym machines, there is a way you can spice things up a bit. When doing cardio, your only concern is getting your heart rate into your target heart rate zone. As long as you accomplish that, you can do anything you want. So why get on the treadmill and walk at the same boring pace for 45 minutes when you could add variety and intensity and get your workout done in less time? Try some of these ideas to make your workouts more fun:



- Break up your workout. Separate your workout into 5-minute segments, each with a different focus – speed, incline, resistance, steady state, etc. By changing your workout every five minutes, you get variety and, because you're focusing on 5 minutes at a time, the workout will fly by.
- Make a cardio medley. Instead of getting on the same machine every time, pick 3 different machines and workout on each for 10 or so minutes.
- Be creative. Look around the gym and see if there are other ways to get in your cardio. Look for a flight of stairs to run up and down or a space where you could jump rope. Walk on the treadmill and then go outside and run around the building for 5 minutes. Look for different things you can do to break up your usual routine and add excitement.

- Try something new. We all have our favorite machines – the machines we gravitate to every time we go to the gym. Winter is a great time to experiment with something completely different. I challenge you to try a machine you've never used before – the Versa climber, step mill, rowing machine, upper body ergometer, swimming ... anything new and different.
- Try group fitness. Even if you're not into group fitness classes, giving one a try can give you new enthusiasm for your workouts. Pick up a schedule at your club and make a deal to try one new class every two weeks. You pick up energy when you workout in a group setting – take advantage of it.

Cardio At Home

If you're a home exerciser, it may seem even harder to get in your workouts since you may not have access to all the machines available at a gym. However, you have even more flexibility since you can use videos, go outside or just make up your own workout right in your living room. Music is one way to motivate yourself so put on your favorite CD and do a workout to it – it doesn't have to be structured. Simply choose some basic cardio exercises such as jumping jacks, jogging in place, front kicks, side shuffles, jump rope, etc. and do each for a minute or so. Even if you only go for 10 minutes, that's 10 minutes you're not sitting around watching television.

If you are watching television, why not use it to fuel your workouts?

Do jumping jacks or run around the block during commercial breaks or pick up some weights for a little strength training in between shows.



If you have cardio machines at home, decide you'll walk on your treadmill for the length of one 30-minute show. Make a deal with yourself that you can't do something fun until you do your workout. Whatever it takes to get you moving.

Workout Videos

Even if you're not a home exerciser, it's a good idea to keep a stash of videos for those days you want something quick and easy. Videos are cheap and allow you to try a variety of activities in the privacy of your own home. There are so many videos out there, there's no reason you can't find something you enjoy. You can try belly dancing, salsa, breakdancing, circuit training, aerobics, yoga ... and on and on.

If your energy is flagging this winter, exercise may be the last thing you feel like doing. But movement generates energy so now is the perfect time to get busy. Keep reminding yourself that spring isn't that far away.

Hang in there and keep moving!



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E A P

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