

Excusercise: Inexcusable Excuses for not Exercising



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Excuse number 3: *"I'm too tired!"*

Irregular exercisers are indeed in a catch 22 situation. You know, damned if you do, damned if you don't. If you do exercise (too much), you'll be tired. If you don't exercise (and get in shape), you'll be tired. Best to exercise, meeting short-term goals without undue fatigue, which will build up strength and endurance and you will be less tired in (almost) no time (there's that time element once again)!! Where to get it? Exercising can increase your stamina, endurance, strength, and overall energy. The trick is to balance energy expenditure with energy recovery.

Aliases:

"It's a long road, with many a winding turn."

"The long and winding road..."

"I'm sick and tired of ... well, being sick and TIRED"

Tired of making excuses? Excuse-making (EXCUSERCISE) can be so oh very tiring.

- 1) Check with your physician. Maybe you are anemic? Low iron in the blood affects the body's ability to transport oxygen to muscles for use in mechanical motion – hence leaving you tired, drained, and fatigued. For some women, this is a temporary monthly issue around menstruation, but if it lingers, time to check it out. Maybe other issues are at hand, foot, and heart (compromised blood flow by occluded or partially blocked arteries may also be a culprit). Perhaps you are low on Vitamin B and need a booster shot or an extra vitamin. Consider wearing a garlic wreath at night to ward off blood-sucking vampires.

- 2) Check your sleeping habits, both quantity and quality. Most normal human units require 7-8 hours sleep a night, but it's the quality that is most important. To improve quality – establish regular evening rituals/routine - turn off the TV and power down your laptop/table/smartphone at least an hour before bedtime. Reduce late night eating/drinking (especially alcohol and caffeine) to avoid frequent bathroom trips. Commence going to bed 15 minutes earlier each night to increase quantity to desired effective amount and think happy thoughts!
- 3) Rest/recovery. Make sure you are obtaining adequate rest between exercise sessions. Employ/practice the concept of Hard/Easy days. One day of hard intense work, followed by one day of light or moderate work. The body needs time to grow and adapt – if you are constantly beating it down – it won't adapt, recover, and grow – it may break down and you may become injured or ill. Change and recharge your batteries frequently. Naps are wonderful things – enjoy them!
- 4) Embrace the art of power napping. Best conducted after lunch - cortisol low swing before 2pm so it does not delay your final day's rest at bedtime. The length of your nap should be 20 minutes so as not to fall into deep sleep. To supercharge your wake-up, consider having a cup of caffeinated coffee just prior to catching your 20 winks.
- 5) FITT (Frequency, Intensity, Time/duration, Type). Recommended exercise progression. Increase Frequency of sessions per week, followed by duration/time, then eventually worry about Intensity. Add various modes or types of activities to avoid injuries that occur with repetitive motions and prevent boredom. Try to avoid high impact activities on back-to-back days. Eventually you will be less tired.

When starting an exercise program, begin with 15-20 minutes of cardiovascular exercise and add 10% (2 minutes) each week. That way the body will grow and

adapt. If 20 minutes is still too much initially, try a few 10-minute sessions.

Full body strength train: every other day (3/week). If that is too much, then go twice per week with three days of rest in between. Another option is to work on a few muscle groups in a workout, then on others in the next session.

Gradually increase intensity. Start an exercise session with a few minutes of warm-up. Movements at a light level may generate energy and give you the spark necessary to ignite the flame. Remember to also cool-down for a few minutes – after reaching your crescendo, you do not want to just stop abruptly (avoid blood pooling in the legs and passing out).

Work out early in the morning when energy levels are renewed. Often after a long day of work you may not have energy left for you or your family. Understandably, you may feel tight in the morning. The body tends to warm up as the day progresses and your power, strength, endurance, and flexibility may peak later in the afternoon, or the evening. Best not to exercise too vigorously close to bedtime as this excitement would delay your body's return to resting rates/states over several hours and may disrupt your sleeping pattern.

- 6) Remember that sometimes your body is indeed somewhat tired, but really wants to exercise to reenergize. Try a 'short' workout and keep going if your body says "Yeah!" and wants more. However, if your body says "Yuck!," then maybe it is really too tired and stopping after just a short exercise session is the best answer. Often your body just wants to get moving and will thank you later. We find that just saying "I'll do 10 minutes now and see how I feel" usually results in completing a full workout, but occasionally after those 10 minutes it may be best to stop and just walk, take it easy, relax, and try again tomorrow, if not later in the day.
- 7) Eat small, frequent meals made up of carbohydrates, good fats, and proteins - every 3-4 hours to keep blood sugar at

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optimal levels for mental and physical peak performance. It works for persons with diabetes and athletes ... it will work well for you too!

- 8) Don't forget the elixir of life...H₂O – Aqua – Water! It is the motor oil of our engines and without adequate daily amounts (8+cups/glasses) we are doomed to stall, stagnate and procrastinate as mental/cognitive, physical and emotional performance and behaviors will fail. Start each day with a full glass or two of water and you may find you might not need a boost from caffeine (coffee/tea).
- 9) Speaking of caffeine.... studies have shown that a well-placed boost from coffee/tea will indeed increase your mental and physical performance. If you are caffeine sensitive (gets the shakes or heart palpitations) best to limit to one cup/day preferably before 2pm. It may give you the willpower to get out the door as well as complete a quality workout.
- 10) Quit your job and devote your life to exercise – you wouldn't be so tired if you didn't have to work so much!
- 11) Acronym and MANTRA: **EMS** – “*Energize Me Scotty!*”
IAE – “*I Am Energy!*” **FSA** – “*Full Speed Ahead!*”

Make sure to include rest/recovery along with your exertion.

