

HIBERNATION IS FOR THE BEARS!

Are you having a hard time staying motivated as the colder months approach? You don't have to let the cold weather end your exercise routine.

Unfortunately, cold weather can discourage even the most motivated exercisers. If you're not motivated easily it's even harder and that much easier to put your workout clothes away.

Bears hibernate in the winter months because their food sources are low and they need to gather another layer of fat to conserve energy sources throughout the cold months. Humans tend to go indoors and hibernate as well but last I checked our food supply is just fine and there is no reason for us to follow suit. After all, do you want to look like a bear?

As the cold weather approaches and kids' schedules get hectic, the last thing we want to do is get to the gym in the darkness of the night or coldness of the morning. We'd rather cuddle up with a good book, cup of tea, a freshly baked cookie, and a warm, cozy blanket in front of a crackling fire, right? The shorter days make us feel tired earlier and that bed is calling our name. 5pm feels like 10pm. Our feel good hormones are suppressed as it gets darker, leaving us moody and tired. Getting to the gym or starting your workout is the biggest hurdle but, once you get over it and start, those feel good hormones will begin to flow making you feel motivated to work hard and stay in the gym!

Here are some tips to help keep you motivated and stay fit as the weather turns cold.

Make an appointment: We are forever scheduling appointments, running here and there, making time for everyone else in our life except for ourselves. I have fallen into this vicious cycle myself....so why not schedule ourselves in? If we're not healthy, how are we going to keep up this hectic lifestyle?

Consistency: Try to schedule your appointments for the same time each day so that you have a consistent pattern that works well with your lifestyle. Write the gym into your schedule each week. Set reminders on your phone. Put your gym schedule where you will see it regularly and be reminded of your appointment.

Appointment with yourself: Schedule the time of day when you are going to work out. This is a valid appointment and should not be broken. This can be at home alone where you can pop in a DVD or jump on the treadmill or go for a walk outside. Whatever your plan is, stick to it!

Seek out a personal trainer: Having a trainer is your built-in motivation! You're investing money and time in your exercise program. A standing appointment with a personal trainer will get your butt in gear for a workout by providing you with an obligation to your designated time and on your off-trainer day workouts. By having to check in with your trainer, you're more likely to keep up with your workouts. Knowing that someone else is keeping track and standing by your side to help you achieve your goals will make it that much harder to skip out on your workout.

Gym visit: Schedule in a time to get to the gym. This is a real appointment for your health and mind. Knowing you have to be somewhere at a certain time and not scheduling anything else will be a surefire way to get to the gym. Call it "ME TIME".

Grab a buddy: Working out with a partner holds you accountable to them so you're far less likely to ditch the session. You will motivate each other throughout the workout. In fact, it just might give you that extra edge to push a little bit harder or further, getting you out of your comfort zone. Exercising with a buddy can help change it up a bit and make it more interesting and fun. A phone call or sending a text message will help keep the focus on your goals throughout the day.

Exercise/ Food journal: Hold yourself accountable for your actions and it will keep you committed and on track. You'll think twice about putting that cookie in your mouth if you're seeing what and how much you're eating and drinking. A food and exercise journal can help you monitor the progress made as a result of changes in your diet and exercise program. If you reach a plateau or goals change, your journal can help you or a professional make appropriate changes to help you continue to move forward. Keeping track of your progress is an encouraging motivational tool in itself as you can see where you were and where you are now.

Eating a nutritionally sound diet: Help fend off the winter blues by replacing simple carbohydrates (white breads, pies, candies, sugar, honey, etc.) with complex ones, such as beans, peas, and whole grains. Eating these foods will help your body store more energy by absorbing them at a slower rate. You'll have more energy and motivation to get through your day, and your workout too!

Make a music play list: Put your head phones on a half hour before getting to the gym to get you pumped up and those feel good hormones flowing! Listening to music during your workout can be inspirational and help motivate you while training. From hardcore heavy metal to dance music, everyone has their own music which helps give them an extra push just when they need it. Music can raise your heart rate and give you an energy boost as well. It can be a stress reliever, letting you rid your body and mind of your daily woes, helping you put more energy into your workout.

Outfit: Is there a particular outfit you want to get back into? Hanging it up where you can see it just may give you the extra boost you need to get to the gym.

Holiday parties: Bathing suit season is gone so why work out so hard now? How about all those holiday parties you have to dress for? And let's not forget all the food at these parties.... If you don't exercise, those pounds will come on fast leaving you depressed and sedentary, causing you to enter that vicious cycle we spoke of earlier.

Family health history: Do you have a family history of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, etc...? Knowledge and visual reminders can help you stay focused on your exercise and nutrition goals enabling your own healthy cycle to continue.

Sex appeal: For some it's all about sex appeal and how others see or perceive us. If this is you, use this as motivation to look and feel good, ultimately becoming more confident in yourself.

Early morning workout: The earlier you wake in the colder months the more daylight you will have. Getting your workout in early will leave you with less stress, feeling good, and more time in the day to get everything done.

Dress in layers: When exercising in the cold weather, it's best to stay warm and take layers off as you get heated up and put them back on as needed. First, put on a thin layer of synthetic material which will pull the sweat away from your body. Avoid cotton as it holds on to water. Next, add a layer of fleece for insulation. The next layer should be a waterproof breathable shirt or jacket. Remember, the leaner you are the more insulation you will need. If it's very cold you may want to wear a face mask or scarf.

The 'before' picture: A photo of yourself at your heaviest or at lightest will also help in your quest to achieve your goals. Get a few and put them on your fridge, at your desk, in your food journal, or wherever you think you will look to help maintain focus on your goals.

Writing down your goals: It is helpful to stay motivated and focused on your goals by having a visual reminder. Not only write them down but why you want to attain them. And then post it! Move your posts around every three days so they don't become lost in your daily visual scope....

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