



client handout

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Are You Ready to Exercise?

Studies have shown that seven out of 10 people who start an exercise program drop out within a few months. One problem is that most people jump into exercise without doing any planning up front. They're just not prepared for the commitment involved. Are you ready to make exercise part of your lifestyle? Find out using the questionnaire below, which was developed by Sherri McMillan, MSc, co-owner of Northwest Personal Training & Fitness Education in Vancouver, Washington, and 1998 IDEA Personal Trainer of the Year. She has discovered that people who stick with exercise buy into the following four "Laws of Success."

- 1. The Law of Possession: "If it is going to be, it is up to me."** Understand that you need to take ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of your exercise program. It may be tempting to blame your husband or kids or shift responsibility to your group exercise instructor or personal trainer, but you will be the one who actually exercises! Loved ones can support you and fitness professionals can help educate and guide you, but *you* must be willing to give up a sedentary lifestyle.
- 2. The Law of Effort: "Anything worth achieving is worth working for."** Exercise takes discipline, willpower, character, persistence and a commitment to delayed gratification. Starting and staying with an exercise program requires hard work, but you can do it!
- 3. The Law of Consistency: "I have to stick to the game plan."** Researchers have found one characteristic common to those who adhere to exercise: They move toward their goals one step at a time and are committed to constant, never-ending improvement. Consistency and persistence are key to achieving results. If you get off track for a week or so, it's no big deal. However, if you are regularly tempted away from your program, you will not succeed. Regardless of busy work schedules or lack of energy, you must keep exercising. For example, if you want to be 10 pounds lighter 10 years from now, it is not what you do over the next eight weeks that matters; it is what you do over the next 10 years.
- 4. The Law of Self-Efficacy: "If I think I can or I think I can't, I'm probably right."** If you immediately start questioning whether you can make the changes required to live an active lifestyle, you are going to have a dif-

ficult time. You must believe you can do it. But don't think you have to make the changes alone. Get support from a personal trainer, an exercise instructor, friends and family, and/or online exercise buddies.

how prepared are you to change?

Answer the following questions to see how ready you are to start—and stick with—exercise.

- If you answer yes to all these questions, you are ready for action!
- If you answer no to one or more questions, you may not be willing to take the actions required to achieve your fitness goals. If this is true, review your priorities and learn more about the negative effects of your current behavior and the benefits of change. You can still initiate an exercise program, but don't be too aggressive in your attempts.

	YES	NO
1. Do you feel you are at some sort of health risk because of your current lifestyle?		
2. Do you feel exercise will improve your quality of life and decrease your risk of health-related disorders?		
3. Do you view exercise as a lifetime goal rather than a short-term, temporary goal?		
4. Are you willing to get personally involved in planning an exercise program rather than leaving decisions up to others?		
5. Are you willing to try different approaches to fitness?		
6. Do you have the patience to accept success in small increments and deal with possible setbacks?		
7. Are you willing to set realistic goals?		
8. Are you willing to make lifestyle changes?		

This handout is a service of IDEA, the leading international membership association in the health and fitness industry.

