

Get Motivated!

Have you set exercise goals but then given up before reaching them? Do you often set goals in your life that you ultimately don't achieve? Why is it so challenging to stay motivated? Well, people are complex and often contradictory in their actions. You may say you want to exercise regularly, yet behave in ways that directly or subtly sabotage your efforts. Use these tips from Kate Larsen, professional certified coach, IDEA Advanced Personal Fitness Trainer and faculty instructor for Wellcoach.com, to develop your motivational muscle:

Be Clear About What You Want—and Why

Think about what will make you feel healthy and whole. Ask yourself, "If I were committed to my exercise program during the next 6 months, what outcome would I most desire?" Be even clearer

about why you want the outcome you do. Ask yourself, "What will I gain from achieving my goal? Will I be healthier, happier or more connected to people?" Without clarity, obstacles will loom larger than your desire. With clarity, you can discover whether your motivation is negative or positive. If it's negative, find a positive motivator to help you pursue your goal.

Determine Step-by-Step Actions

Brainstorm the specific actions that will help you reach your goal. Like goals, actions need to be specific and measurable. They must define what you will do, by when and with whom. If your goal, for example, is to lose 20 pounds in 6 months, what actions can you take to support that goal? Exercise? How often, when, where and with whom? Visit a registered dietitian to see how you can trim fat and calories from your diet? Buy healthy foods once a week so you'll have them in the house? Setting appropriate actions is key to getting where you want to be.

Adopt Helpful Attitudes

What attitudes can you consciously take on throughout the process of reaching your goal? Your attitudes, more than any other factors, will help you follow through on actions. Language is important. Listen to your self-talk—the chatter inside your head that assesses your place in the world, affecting your mood and, ultimately, your behavior. Self-talk can either pummel you into the ground or propel you to success. Use empowering words like "I will" instead of uncertain ones like "I'll try" (which usually mean that you won't!).

Practice weeding out damaging, defeating and limiting self-talk. In *Learned Optimism*, Martin Seligman suggests we learn to capture automatic thoughts (which are often negative), evaluate them for accuracy and replace them with more optimistic thoughts. Work on being courageous, self-nurturing, committed, hopeful and flexible. Learn to let go of past failures, frustrations, limitations, negative self-talk and perfectionism, and set your mind firmly on the path toward achieving your goal.

Hire Professional Support

Consider hiring a personal trainer or professional coach to help you reach your goals. Look for a professional who will not only give you accurate, safe training information but also tell you the truth. Truth ultimately empowers you. When a trainer tells the truth about your obstacles and what you need to do to reach your goals, you can honestly evaluate your choices and direction. Look for someone who will also cheer you on, remind you of specific achievements and provide more opportunities for success.

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR CLIENTS.

courtesy of



sponsored by



MOTIVATIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources can inspire you and help you increase positive self-talk:

- Carlson, R., & Bailey, J. 1997. *Slowing Down to the Speed of Life: How to Create a More Peaceful, Simpler Life From the Inside Out*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Carson, R.D., & Rogers, N. 1986. *Taming Your Gremlin: A Guide to Enjoying Yourself*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Helmstetter, S. 1990. *What to Say When You Talk to Yourself*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Larsen, K. 2001. "THINK, CHOOSE, WIN: The Fundamentals of Self-Coaching" (audiocassette). Minneapolis: Forrester Audio Network.
- Seligman, M.E.P. 1991. *Learned Optimism*. New York: A.A. Knopf.