

Motivation: The Key To Lifelong Weight Loss And Health

A client of mine recently dropped me an email with the following question:

"How do I keep myself motivated? I've recently been on a bit of a downward spiral, and I'm trying to pull myself out of it. Is there a workout routine or some kind of mental exercise I could do to make myself more psyched and into things? Thanks!"

This is common in both fitness and weight loss programs. Being human we all have our ups and downs. First, it is important to recognize our human qualities. When this occurs we can slow down and "go with it" until we feel motivated again. After all, a good program is to be incorporated into our lifestyle. We want to use it for the rest of our lives and we all go through ups and downs. Find a groove with it and flow along. The important thing here is to not drop your program when you do this, just adjust it until you feel motivated again.

The other approach is to set out to find a new motivation. Again, life is full of ups and downs and for some of us, when the "downs" come we need to find a new way to keep us charging to our goal.

If you are looking for motivation to get something done ... think of a reward for completing that something and stick to giving yourself that reward. If you just need more motivation about life in general then a quick bout of exercise first thing every morning should help you start your day right. You can use the exercise time to focus your mind and body on being healthy which should help you get a better outlook on life in general.

One of the great motivators is surprisingly, exercise itself. Studies show exercise can improve mental abilities in the elderly and go some way to preventing mental decline. Scientists found mental abilities, or cognitive functioning, improved with exercise.

The reason for the link is unclear, but the researchers believe it could be linked to the fact exercise improves the body's ability to pump blood and blood's oxygen-carrying capacity. The findings were a side benefit of research comparing the effects of exercise and drugs in fighting depression. Improvements were seen "above and beyond" what was expected after the depression had lifted.

James Blumenthal, a psychologist at the Duke University Medical Center, in Durham, North Carolina, said one of the key findings was that exercise had beneficial effects on functions controlled by specific areas of the brain. Memory, planning, organisation and juggling different tasks all improved under the study.

The implications are that exercise might be able to offset some of the mental declines that we often associate with the ageing process. So it may be that just as exercise improves muscle tone and function, it may have similar effects on the brain.

So what does this mean for you? It means that even with a down cycle in your life a brisk 30 to 45 minute walk each day might begin a long term countereffect of your downward cycle. Take a walk. If you are fit do a slow jog instead of a breath gulping run. The conclusion is, stay with your programs even when you are depressed or in a downward cycle. Look for new motivations and rewards for yourself as you progress out of it and into a new, upward cycle.

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About the Author

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