

[IMAGE]

3 Big Reasons to Keep Exercising

By Editorial Staff

It's the beginning of fall and winter's not far behind – although in some areas of the country, it seems as if summer isn't going anywhere. You may have stuck to your exercise regimen for the first three-quarters of the year, but what's going to keep you dedicated for the last quarter, particularly when many others fail during this tempting time? Here are three reasons why now's the time to rededicate yourself to year-round health and wellness by making sure your exercise program's intact:

1. Weather woes: If you work out early in the morning, things get a little trickier when the temperature drops. Suddenly getting out of bed at the crack of dawn to work out isn't nearly as appealing as staying warm and cozy underneath a mound of blankets. And even if you do manage to take the first step, handling the prevailing conditions - either on your way to the gym or throughout your workout if you're exercising outdoors - is a challenge many fail. Somehow wind, rain, cold and/or snow don't work well for many exercisers.

The solution: Check the 10-day weather forecast frequently to determine the best times to exercise, particularly if you're jogging or doing some other form of exercise outdoors. Set out your workout clothes the night before to get yourself motivated and ready to roll the next day. And keep reminding yourself that Mother Nature can't stop you from accomplishing your fitness goals.

exercise - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark 2. *Holiday diversion:* The last three months of the year feature Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and, depending on your religion and traditions, any number of other celebratory events. Holidays mean two things: lots of food and a lot less time - which is a dangerous combination for people trying to stick to their exercise schedule.

The solution: As you're filling in your calendar of events, mark down the days (and times) you'll exercise. If the schedule for a particularly day or set of days is just too packed to sneak in your regular workout, brainstorm other ways to stay active: a walk after a big holiday meal, a football game with friends and family, etc. If you're traveling over a holiday, make sure to pack a few light weights, a kettlebell and your running shoes so no matter what, you've got the tools to stay fit at your disposal.

3. Resolution time: As a new year approaches, many people adopt the strategy (excuse) that they can quit exercising for the last month or two of the year because they've got exercise on their New Year's resolution list. Bad strategy, to say the least. First, why risk undoing the first 9-10 months of success now? Second, particularly if consistent exercise is somewhat new to you, taking a chunk of time off sets the stage for a permanent vacation. Similar to eating habits, with exercise once you stop (for longer than a few days to a week or so), the harder it can be to start.

The solution: Resolve to finish strong this year and celebrate the holidays by celebrating your fitness accomplishments. Prioritizing fitness year-round makes the need for an annual recommitment unnecessary; after all, why resolve to get back in shape if you're already there? Keep exercising and remind yourself that being in shape feels *much* better than the alternative.

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