

[IMAGE]

Sticking With Fitness: It's Good to Be Flexible

By Editorial Staff

Depending on where you live, the winter months can be challenging when it comes to sticking to a fitness program. That's no more true than this season, which has proven to be extreme and unpredictable. How do you keep to your program when the weather can turn on you in a moment's notice? It's all about being flexible; ensuring that your fitness "toolbox" contains a wide variety of "tools" so you're always in a position to exercise, whether indoors or outdoors; cold weather or hot; come rain or shine. Here are three strategies to help develop a diverse workout program that's fit for any season and any condition.

1. **Home Is Where the Heart Is:** Developing a full-body home exercise program is essential to sticking to your fitness goals when weather conditions, time constraints or other challenges make a trip to the gym next to impossible. If you're locked into an exercise routine that requires free weights, machines and cardio classes, you're up a proverbial creek when the gym closes its door (or you can't get out of yours).

Quick Tip: Outline an at-home program that mimics your gym routine, but requires only your body-weight or fundamental equipment you can keep at home (light hand weights, a kettlebell, exercise bands, a pull-up bar, etc.). Even if you're a gym enthusiast, your at-home routine is there for you when you need it.

2. **Substitutions Can Save You:** It's well-established that doing the same exercises over and over not only leads to eventual burnout, but also causes your body to plateau, keeping it from continually advancing in terms of fitness, weight loss, muscle growth, etc. The more options you have, the more you can vary your fitness program - and in terms of *this* conversation, be capable of mixing things up on the fly when Mother Nature or some other unforeseen circumstance rears its ugly head.

Quick Tip: Ask your doctor or fitness trainer to provide you with 4-5 different exercise options for each exercise you currently perform. You'll be surprised at how many variations exist - and how effective it can be to mix up your routine every few weeks to a month.

3. **It's Not Where, It's When:** The most important strategy for maintaining your fitness program in less-than-optimal times is to remind yourself that what matters most is that you exercise - as Nike famously urges, "Just do it." How you get it done (as long as you're being safe) isn't nearly as

important as getting it done.

Quick Tip: Whether it's the weather, stress or an unholy workload, finding time to exercise isn't easy - plain and simple. But it's also true that if you want to achieve your lifelong fitness goals, you need to "just do it." Map out your week every Sunday to determine, among other things, when and where you will exercise. Make it a part of your busy schedule and enjoy the rewards!

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