5 Ways to Beat Exercise Boredom

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You can stick to your exercise plan, with the help of secrets from real people who've found weight-loss success. We asked: How do you stick to a fitness routine, long after you are bored with it?

You know it like you know many of life's truths: the sun will rise tomorrow, one item always remains on a to-do list, you cannot hide things from your scale or your mother, and, most important, exercise is a must.

But knowing and doing are two separate concepts. "The beginning of a new routine is usually not a problem," says Ronda Gates, a lifestyle management counselor in Lake Oswego, Oregon. "It's farther down the road, when the new lifestyle still isn't integrated and the old one is tugging on you to return."

To help you make exercise a regular reality, consider these expert suggestions from Gates and several faithful exercisers.

1. **Develop a plan of accountability**, says Gates. "For some people it's simply writing information in an exercise journal, and for others it's reporting to a coach or another person," she says. "Commitment plus accountability equals success."

2. **Rely on the pleasure principle**. Ask yourself what motivates you, what you enjoy. Gates suggests listening to an MP3 player or watching television while on an exercise machine.

   "I hate to exercise but I like to walk," says Naomi, a legal secretary who lives in Brooklyn, New York. "I get off a stop early on the bus or train and I walk home or to work. I also [listen to music]. Time goes by fast and I get my exercise."

3. **Seek variety**. If you walk outdoors on the same path every day, attempt to find one thing that's different about your walk—an emerging flower, the number of dogs in the neighborhood—or take a different route each time.

4. **Find a workout partner**. "Exercising with a friend allows you to monitor your intensity while you get caught up on one another's news," says Gates. "If I think my exercise will be boring, meeting and walking with someone is a guaranteed cure for relieving that boredom."

5. **Keep your eye on the prize**. "Just do it," says Karen, a New York-based executive assistant. "I work out three times a week in the morning so I start my day off feeling good. I don't enjoy losing an extra hour of sleep, but I enjoy how I feel during and after my workout," says Karen.

   "It's a part of life," she adds. "Sometimes I don't like going to work but I have to do it to enjoy the rewards of my life. I feel the same way about working out."