



Breaking Point: What Really Got Me Exercising Again

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I used to have a love-hate relationship with exercising.

I loved how it made me feel and I loved that it allowed me to indulge in some of my favorite foods (bring on the nachos!), but I also loathed the burden of finding time in my busy day to exercise. It was a lot of hard work—carving out that time, getting all sweaty and then trying to freshen up, or waking up early to do it. Throw in a few kids and the task seemed impossible.

So I took a few years off, figuring I could get my body back after I was done having kids. Of course, I kept having kids, so that chance never came and I was finally forced to start exercising so I didn't have to go out and buy an all new wardrobe. And slowly, my relationship with exercise started to change. What I had once viewed as just another chore in my day became the only part of my day that was just *mine*.

Instead of treating exercise as a boring task, I started to see it as almost an indulgence. A chance to spend thirty minutes on my elliptical while watching *Gilmore Girls*? Pure bliss. And much like proclaiming you're on a diet makes you automatically want to wolf down a hot fudge sundae, I came to realize that treating exercise as something hard made me want to avoid it. But treating it as "me time" or something that was a break from my normal day, kid and work-free, helped me to look forward to that time.

"Exercising isn't a chore, and shouldn't be looked at as such," notes **personal trainer and exercise physiologist Franci Cohen**. "It should be part of your daily routine for a healthy body and sound mind. One way to change your view and give you a healthier outlook on exercise, is to exercise in the morning. We all have our morning self-care routines. They often include washing our face, brushing teeth, etc. Exercise should be part of this routine as well. And that endorphin rush post-exercise will leave you feeling invigorated, and super-charged, ready to start off your day!"

Here a few ways real women have turned their exercise dread into delight.

1. Prevention. Even if you're not ready to start exercising as a real means to losing weight, maybe it would help you to get in the habit of working out to prevent further weight gain or to make a pregnancy a little easier. After gaining 55 pounds with her first pregnancy, Amy Fraser Tackabury resolved to make exercise a real commitment in her life.

“I knew I wanted to have more children and I couldn’t let that happen to me again,” she relates. “And trust me it was bad weight, not good weight. Being a mom definitely put me into the ‘real and regular’ exercise category. Now I exercise to keep my sanity.”

2. Starting with one thing. Katie of Loves of Life blog broke an unhealthy weight gain cycle by committing to doing just “one thing” for her health.

“I just knew I needed something and so something was better than nothing, and something helped kick my butt in gear,” she wrote on her blog. “I started small. I tracked my eating. I still lived a rather sedentary lifestyle. I did one thing at a time, and at the time, getting control of my eating with tracking, etc, really put me in a place that helped me to be more self aware — which in turn, led to healthy weight loss.”

These days, Katie says that just taking that one step changed her life to a person who is physically and mentally capable of doing more than she ever even dared to dream.

“When it comes to the exercise portion—I just made the choice to fit it into my daily routine and after a few weeks/months of doing that I just simply could not imagine NOT doing it,” she told TapGenes. “It felt harder to miss a workout than it did to show up.”

3. A fresh start. Getting out of a relationship or going through a divorce? Taking up exercise may help you get the fresh start you are looking for.

“I got really serious with running after a bad break up,” says Meg Hendrix Robinson. “It gave me a healthy outlet and turned into a passion...and the results were a boost of confidence It’s genuinely a therapy session for me!”

4. Friendship. Exercising on a regular basis can also be a great way to find new friends and forge relationships that could last a lifetime. Anne Dziekońska, a mom of two, went to her first Zumba class at the invite of a friend and now is a dedicated attendee, going three times a week.

“The friendship and fun with all the other people in class keeps me going!” she says.