



Forget your New Year's Resolution- Just Do It!!!

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Now that the New Year is here it is time for many of us to start working on the old standby New Year's resolution to exercise regularly. If this is your resolution, I wish you the best of luck and hope that you succeed. Inevitably, most of us are doomed to time and again fail to follow through on this resolution for a wide variety of excuses (I don't have enough time, I'm too lazy, I'm allergic to exercise, my joints hurt, I get plenty of exercise at work/working around the house...). I have a new resolution for you, "Don't give up, and when you do, start over again." Too many times we see ourselves failing in our resolutions so we just give up and tell ourselves it will be different when we make the same resolution next year. In the meantime, we get fatter, another year older, and more out of shape which will make it that much easier to fail on the same resolution the next year.

My advice to you is to start out small/slow: Pick 3 nonconsecutive days each week and set aside 20-30 minutes at the same time on those scheduled days to start exercising. I would recommend that you start out easy so as not to injure yourself before you have a chance to get started. I am always sore 2-3 days after my first workout after not exercising for a prolonged period of time. Get your heart pumping: ride an exercise bike, elliptical machine, stairstepper, or do a fast walk or slow jog to get your heart in shape for the first 2-3 weeks. Slowly build up how long/far/fast you go. If you are not a runner and would like to start, then start out walking fast to get your joints used to the increased impact before progressing (if you choose to do so) to jogging/running. After 2-3 weeks, start alternating upper and lower body workouts and maybe increase to 4-5 days a week to keep working on your cardiopulmonary endurance.

Avoid injury by listening to your body. Too many times I see patients that keep exercising because they do not hurt during the activity, but instead have some pain after exercising. They keep exercising and before long they are having pain during the activity. They decide to keep exercising without letting their body heal, and eventually they hurt so much that they can no longer exercise and finally come to see me for help. Remember, it is much easier to prevent injury than it is to resolve it once you have an injury. The quicker that you respond to what your body is telling you and allow it to heal, the faster you will be able to return to your desired activity level.

There are other simple ways to reduce your risk for injury. 1) Vary your workouts so that you have easy and harder days. 2) Drink plenty of fluids/water (not just during your exercise, but throughout the day even on your rest days) to stay properly hydrated. 3) Get plenty of rest. Exercising while

excessively fatigued can lead to injury. 4) Exercise correctly. Too many of us do not know the proper way to bike/run efficiently or perform weightlifting exercises properly which leads to injury. Seek out professional help from an exercise expert (e.g. personal trainer, athletic trainer, physical therapist) if you need help in this area or are not sure if you are exercising correctly. Exercising correctly minimizes stress on the body/joints and will reduce your risk for injury.

And last, but definitely not least... 5) Don't give up!!! Get into your routine and keep going. If you get sick or just take a couple weeks off it is always hard to get back into the routine. Just back off a little and build back up to where you left off. I'll be cheering for you. Good luck and Happy New Year!!!