



Work the body beautiful

We all know we should, but find excuses not to. But if you do it every day, it really *will* make you feel so much better, **ROCCO SORACE** writes

It's 6.30am, the alarm goes off, and all you want to do is snuggle under the covers and hit snooze for that extra half hour . . . you consider sleeping in for a bit longer, but this means skipping that morning workout you promised yourself you would do the night before . . .

Sound familiar? Many of us struggle with situations such as these far too often. With so much emphasis on the importance of regular physical activity these days, we are more aware of the benefits of exercise than we have ever been.

Most people know that leading an active lifestyle can help with the following.

- Increase life span
- Reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease
- Reduce the risk of developing certain cancers
- Reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure/cholesterol
- Reduce/maintain body fat
- Build/maintain healthy muscles, bones and joints
- Reduce depression and anxiety
- Improve psychological well-being
- Enhance work, recreation and sporting performance
- Increase metabolism

Yet, an estimated 60-70 per cent of the Australian population does not engage in regular physical activity.

The most common reasons as to why people fail to stick to a regular exercise regime include lack of time, inability to get to a gym, lack of motivation, fear of injury and misconceptions about exercise. It is barriers such as these that have caused up to 70 per cent of us to sacrifice regular physical activity, an element that is as vital to our health and well-being as food, water and shelter.

By taking a closer look at the barriers that keep us glued to our couches, I hope to help anyone out there who is struggling to overcome them.

I don't have enough time to exercise

One of the leading reasons many of us fail

to stick to a regular exercise routine is the belief that we never have time. With the busy lifestyles most people lead, it can seem almost impossible to fit in a workout every day. However, studies have shown that if we can commit just 30 minutes a day to some physical activity, health and wellbeing can improve dramatically.

I don't believe there is anyone out there who is unable to dedicate just 30 minutes a day to their fitness, even if it be split into two sets of 15 or three sets of 10 minutes. Whether it be taking the stairs instead of the lift to the office, taking a walk during your lunch break, kicking the footy or playing some Frisbee with the kids after work (I'm sure they would appreciate it!) or hiring a mobile trainer to train you at the destination/time of your choice, there are plenty of ways to keep active.

I don't have the energy to exercise

It can be a struggle to get moving at times, but I can guarantee that once your body becomes accustomed to regular workouts, energy levels will soar and sitting still is the only struggle. I remember being new to exercise and sometimes dreading what lay ahead, but before I knew it, I began craving the workouts, because I loved the way I felt afterwards.

When we exercise, endorphins (the "happy hormones") are produced and released into the body, causing an overall sense of happiness, relaxation and wellbeing. So if low energy levels are preventing you from staying active, focus on how fantastic you will feel if you do workout regularly.

I can't get to a gym and I don't like them anyway

Many people simply don't like gyms, as they can be a little daunting, particularly if you are new to exercise. Let's face it, being surrounded by muscle-bound Arnie look-alikes, and women who look like they should be on the cover of a magazine, can be slightly intimidating! The good news is, these days you don't need a gym to keep fit. You have the option to hire a mobile personal trainer who will travel to the destination of your

choice and provide training programs catered to your specific needs and goals. Mobile training can also be highly convenient for busy mums who can't leave the house for long enough to visit a gym, as trainers will happily provide a workout in the comfort of your own home.

Boot camps are also ideal for those of you who would rather avoid the gym, as they present the opportunity to work out in a number of different environments. They are also a fantastic way to get the results you wanted fast, as there is ongoing support and a high level of motivation from the trainers.

Exercise is boring

This is only the case if you choose boring activities. You wouldn't wear the same clothes, or eat the same food every day, so if physical activity is as vital to our wellbeing as these things, why choose the same boring exercise?

Choose something you enjoy, whether it be dancing, a sport, or having a personal trainer provide you with a program that caters for your likes and dislikes. Ensure that you mix up your exercise routine, so you are not taking part in the same activity every day (eg: Monday night dancing class, Wednesday night personal training session, Friday afternoon beach jog/walk), this way our minds stay motivated and our bodies stay challenged.

Exercise is too painful and I'm afraid I'll injure myself

The old saying "no pain, no gain" is one that should be disregarded completely. Exercise does not and should not need to be painful to be beneficial and effective. Yes, it may be true that if you are training towards an elite level of fitness (such as an athlete or bodybuilder preparing for competition), you will need to endure a high level of intensive training. However, for those of us who wish to exercise for the sake of general health and well-being, a moderate level of activity will suffice.

Still, it is important that as fitness increases, the intensity of our workouts are increased also, to ensure that our bodies

continue to respond to the activity. A good personal trainer will be able to provide a program suited to your goals and adjust it according to increases in your fitness levels.

At no stage throughout a workout should any pain be experienced, and if it is, the activity should be ceased immediately.

A great instructor once told the class I was participating in, "This is not pain, this is just necessary discomfort!", and I think a life of looking and feeling fantastic is worth enduring a bit of "necessary discomfort".

Conclusion

The barriers mentioned above are only a few of those preventing us from engaging in regular physical activity, and hopefully I have helped to show that there are many ways to overcome them. So next time the alarm goes off and you are tempted to put off your workout regime until "next week", remember all of the benefits of exercise awaiting you, pull on those trainers and get yourself on the track towards achieving the optimal health, fitness and wellbeing you deserve!

GIVEAWAY

Relax has 10 copies of Rocco Sorace's *Mind and Body Bootcamp* DVD to give away, courtesy of Duke Home Entertainment. The holistic workout involves a warm-up, cardio kick-boxing, strength and fitness, pilates, stretching and relaxation. Email relax@canberrames.com.au with the best excuse you tell yourself to avoid exercise.



■ Rocco Sorace operates the Melbourne-based Focus Fitness, a personal training business that runs a range of individualised programs which aim to motivate and support people who want a total approach to body sculpting/building and weight loss. He has extensive experience in the fitness industry and his individualised programs have enabled him to accompany clients, as a personal trainer, during the 2004 Athens Olympics.