March Out of That Winter Slump

By Molly Householder, CPT and Wellness Director, Westminster Village

The days are getting longer, a hint of spring is in the air, and another winter will soon be over. Time to, "March out of that winter slump and make exercise a habit." We all know at least one person that never skips their regular workout – no matter what! What is their secret? Everyone has the potential to be just like that, to get to the gym every day, to set aside time no matter what to walk or take a yoga class or go for a bike ride. There are a lot of different ways to exercise and the more we do it, the more we want to keep doing it.

The question is: how do you make exercise a habit? How can you make it part of your routine that you actually look forward to each day? The first thing is to start – whether you are beginning a fitness program for the first time, or trying to start back up after an interruption like travel, holidays, or illness. Woody Allen once said that, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." Don't worry about how long you work out or how much you do, your only goal should be to "show up" and start. Here are some tips for sticking with it and making exercise a habit:

Give It Time

There is a myth that it takes 21 days to make a habit. Working in the fitness field for almost 13 years now, I would say it takes close to six weeks to really get into a fitness habit. With consistent workouts for six weeks, you start to see an aesthetic change in your body. You begin to notice if you have missed a couple days because you've experienced the energy and natural high you get from your workouts.

Do Something You Enjoy

Maybe you tried a yoga class and it didn't keep your attention or you were too sore to try that weight class for a second time: this doesn't mean that another form of exercise won't be perfect for you. Keep trying different ways of working out until you find something you enjoy and will look forward to doing again and again.

Start Slow

There is one sure way to put a stop to your new exercise routine before it really gets going and that is by getting hurt. Whether you are beginning or returning to a fitness routine you need to be careful about doing too much too soon. Avoid injuring yourself by beginning every workout with a 5-10 minute warm up of light cardio and stretching. Remember to err on the side of too easy as opposed to too hard in the beginning and gradually progress your intensity.

Find the Right Time

Some people find that working out first thing in the morning is better because there is less time for distractions or excuses to arise. Other people have found that exercising on the way home from work is the most convenient way to make sure it gets done. The important thing is to find what works best for your schedule and make it a routine. Just like going to work or taking your kids to school, your workout should be a part of your regular daily routine.

Set Goals

It is important to set a goal that means something to you but it is also important to make sure that goal is attainable. Short-term goals such as making it to the gym four times a week or using a pedometer to reach a certain amount of steps in a day are great to start with. Be aware of all indicators of your progress. It is nice when clothes start to fit better or you are able to work out longer without getting tired, but remember there are many different ways to appreciate your progress. For instance, after exercising consistently, most people notice that they sleep better, have more energy, and think more clearly. Who wouldn't enjoy such positive benefits of something so simple to do!

"Woody Allen once said that, 'Eighty percent of success is showing up.' Don't worry about how long you work out or how much you do, your only goal should be to 'show up' and start."

As Walt Disney said, "The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing." Start now, start slow, and stay consistent!

Westminster Village offers a continuum of care, including independent living, licensed assisted living and skilled nursing care. For more information, please contact Lacey Pitchet, Director of Marketing, Westminster Village at 309-663-6474 or email: info@westminstervillagenc.com.

Photo credit: iStockPhoto

EDWARD W. PEGG MD, LLC

- Neuromuscular Disease
- Electromyography/Nerve Conduction Studies (EMG/NCS)
- Botox® and Trigger-Point Injections
- General Neurology Sports Neurology & Concussion Management

1505 Eastland Drive, Suite 2400
Bloomington, IL 61701

(309) 661-7344
(309) 661-PEGG

Commercial Insurance • Worker's Compensation
Motor Vehicle Accidents • Third-Party Liability