



## Exercise Self-Talk: Are You Motivating or De-motivating Yourself?

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How do you motivate yourself to exercise? Many of us begin an exercise routine because we think we're too fat, too thin, not shapely enough, or something of the like. Very often, we start out being unhappy with our body and therefore use negative motivation to exercise. We say things like "I hate my (insert offending body part here)", "I'm too (insert negative adjective here)", or "I don't look good". When it comes to going to the gym, we use lines like "get out of bed, lazy", or "you're so bad for eating all of that food last night".

That kind of motivation will get some off the couch and into the sneakers. But long term, this type of thinking can eat away at the drive to exercise. Thoughts of being "bad", and "not good enough" can easily bring us down a slippery slope into thoughts like "what's the use", or "why bother".

Take a look at how you motivate yourself to exercise. Try to identify what you say to yourself regarding your body and fitness. You may discover that you're pretty positive about exercise, and honestly like the way you feel after a good workout. Or, you may realize that you beat yourself up inside every time you need to get yourself to the gym.

If you're the punishing kind, try to catch yourself when you're in the midst of negative motivation. Then try replacing the dialogue with something more loving like: "I'm taking care of my body by exercising and eating right." Or, "When I take care of myself, I can take care of others better". Or, "I love my body: it takes care of me and I'm caring for it with good food and exercise". You can substitute the word "body" with "self", "legs", "midsection" or anything that you might be finding fault with at the moment.

For the next month, try giving yourself some support and appreciation when it comes to regular exercise. After practicing positive motivation instead of negative, you might begin to see a difference in how you feel about exercise. Instead of dreading it, you may actually look forward to it. Better yet, you may even feel better about yourself in general.

*It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!*

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