7 WAYS TO STAY MOTIVATED

This is all about motivation. 7 motivational tips to take with you for life!

A huge part of my job is to keep my clients motivated so here are my 7 biggest tips for keeping yourself motivated.

1. **Schedule your training sessions**

There's nothing more likely to kill your regime than a bad plan of action. If you haven't already, think about when and where you'll be doing your exercise this week. I find that often people can stick to their diet without too much thought, but sometimes their exercise sessions fall away.

This is far more likely to happen if you don't schedule sessions. It's very easy to get to the weekend and think "Oh crap, I haven't done anything yet. Oh well, I'll start fresh on Monday". Prevent yourself from making that mistake by taking a minute now to think about when and where you'll be doing your sessions. Once they're scheduled, you'll find it far easier to get them ticked off the list.

2. **Get an exercise buddy**

A great way to stay motivated is to have an exercise buddy. Maybe you need to try and workout with a friend? Who's around that you can train with? I train with Matt Boyles from Fitter You, and if he's not training, I often end up skipping the gym as well. Having an appointment where someone is going to be there is a great way to ensure that you hit the gym. That's why I've been kept in work for the past 10 years. People know that even when they are feeling no motivation whatsoever, I'll be knocking on their door to make sure they do a workout.

3. **Set yourself some S.M.A.R.T goals**

Sometimes it's easy to feel like you're going nowhere. If you can't see progress or direction, it's like driving around with no destination. Eventually you'll get bored and pull over.

One way to stay motivated is to set clear goals so you can A) have some kind of idea where the hell you're headed and B) recognize when you're actually achieving these goals - which is great for mental wellbeing (assuming you ARE actually achieving your goals – or at least some of them).

It's an age-old method of creating goals and I may be "teaching Granny to suck eggs" here, but I'm a big fan of making SMART Goals and below I'll explain what that means.

When setting goals, they must be S.M.A.R.T – i.e.

- Specific
- Measurable

- Accountable
- Realistic
- Timelined

To “get fitter” is the worst goal EVER. How much fitter? How will you know if you’re fitter? How long have you got to achieve getting fitter? Surely by going for 1 run, you’ll be fitter than you were if you didn’t go for a run? Yeah, you’re only gonna be a teeny-weeny bit fitter, but that’s the point. Being “fitter” is not specific, timelined or measurable. It is realistic though, so at least it ticks one of the boxes.

A better goal would be to say: I want to be able to run/wheel 10k in under 1 hour, by my 40th birthday. This is very SPECIFIC, you have a TIMELINE in mind, so you can track and MEASURE your progress along the way. Then throw in some accountability by booking yourself in for a race and publicizing it on your social media platforms or get people to sponsor you. Is it realistic? Depends how fast you are at the moment and more importantly, how old you are.

If you’re 39 years and 48 weeks, I’d say you’ve left it a little late ;) If your goals aren’t S.M.A.R.T. you’ll find that it’s easy to lose motivation.

4. Start following motivators and stay away from negative nellies

If you’re struggling for motivation, one thing which loads of people do is follow motivational accounts on Instagram or Facebook. There are loads out there and it’s helps if you pop onto Instagram in the morning and see someone giving you a big motivational thumbs up and an inspirational quote. I try to provide these as much as possible on my Instagram account. Do you follow me? If not, get on Instagram and look up disabilitytraining. It’s a pretty cool account (I would say that) and not only do you get to see motivational posts, but I also post a few pictures of me with my shirt off. What’s not to like???

Here’s an example (free abs shot for you too)

The easiest way to search through motivational accounts is to do a search for hashtags like #motivation #fitspiration #motivationmonday

But make sure you don’t follow people who post all day about how bad things are. It’s easy to get sucked up into this if you follow other people with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

5. Give yourself a reward!

A great way to keep you motivated is to make some promises that you'll give yourself a reward if you achieve your goals. One MS Warrior in my Facebook group has been promised a Sea Kayak by her partner if she meets a specific weight loss goal set by her Doctor. This keeps her on her healthy diet as she can see the goal at the end and the only way she'll get that Kayak is to hit her weight loss target.

This is a great way to do it because somebody else in providing the added motivation. But if you have the discipline you can set yourself some of your own goals. Here are a few examples:

- Reward yourself with a nice dinner at a restaurant if you hit your weekly target on weight loss or number of training sessions.
- Buy yourself some new running shoes if you manage to exercise 20 times in a single month
- Give yourself a chocolate bar if you manage 30 days without any treats
- Buy yourself a new dress when you drop a dress size

There are loads you can do, depending on your goals, but you've gotta have the goals in the first place. If you haven't yet, set some today and work out what reward you'll give yourself when you achieve your goals.

6. Set yourself challenges

Fresh new challenges often keep us more engaged when trying to keep active. Here's a motivational challenge for you:

Try NOT to eat refined sugary stuff this week. I bet you can't. If you're still eating sugary treats, drinks, cake sweet pastries etc, why don't you cut it out for the week?

You have the rest of the day to mentally prepare yourself. Have a treat, have a cocktail if you must. But nothing from tomorrow onwards. You're allowed fruit of course - because that's your friend, but no sweets or candy! Here's a list of things which you are to be avoiding:

- Alcohol
- Cake
- Chocolate
- Sweets/candy
- Pastries
- Jelly/jello
- Yoghurt
- Frogurt
- Ice cream/sorbet
- Soda/fizzy drinks
- Milky drinks such as lattes, milkshakes, smoothies, cappuccinos

Give that a go and see how you get on.

P.s. Subtly, I've just shown you another way to motivate yourself. I've created a challenge and made it competitive by adding phrases like "I bet that you can't remain treat free all week" Maybe you can use this to your advantage. Make bets with someone that you'll do something or achieve a certain thing. When I did an Iron Man (3.8 km swim, 180km cycle then a 40k run all in one go) I mainly stuck to the training because my best friend said I was a dick for signing up and I wouldn't be able to finish it. I like to prove the naysayers wrong ;)

And here's a suggestion - for added accountability post your challenges onto social media.

7. Join a Group!

Joining a Facebook group can be a good way to stay motivated. You may be in my Facebook group. If you're using it correctly, you'll be engaging with other members, being vocal about your goals and trying to gain some kind of accountability from the rest of the group.

I try to set challenges in there to motivate people. Occasionally I provide recipes to help keep you on the right tracks from a nutritional perspective. But more often the support you'll get is from the other members of the group.

Get yourself in some other groups too. The more the merrier! Just do a search on Facebook for groups which contain your target group. My group is great, but it's not the only one out there.

Alternatively you may find a local group where you meet people face to face. This is more challenging if you're trying to meet people with similar conditions to yours, however you can join any group. As long as it's something that will motivate you and help you engage with others.

8. (A bonus one) Reflect on How Far You've Come

Sometimes to stay motivated, all you need to do is look how far you've come. Often the journey ahead can seem long and arduous, so focusing on what you've done & what you've achieved can be a great way to keep you pushing towards your goals. Looking to the future can be daunting but a reminder that you've been pushing for x amount of time and you've nailed that, so you just need to keep going.

But the true KING of motivation is accountability. Whatever form it takes, there's needs to be a reason to keep going. A reason not to stop because sometimes you'll feel down, tired, negative, like there's no point or like things aren't working. That's when you'll stop or break the progress.

I mentioned it earlier in the S.M.A.R.T. goals section and it really is an important part of the process. Whether you're using a friend to keep you accountable, a group of peers, or a coach, make sure that you have some kind of consequence to keep you going when it gets tough.

It's a huge part of my system when working with clients to keep them on track throughout their programme. With weekly calls, in-app messaging and regular reviews of progress and daily motivational emails, health and fitness is always a priority for them.

If you would like to talk to me to find out if you'd be a good fit for one of my programmes, click below to book in a free 30 minute Goal Setting call. On the call we'll look at your current situation, clearly define your goals, discuss what's holding you back and plan a route to help get you moving towards achieving your goals.

If I can help you with achieving them, great, but the worst-case scenario will be you coming away with clearly defined goals and me making some recommendations on routes you can take to get there. Click below to schedule a call.

BOOK YOUR GOAL SETTING CALL