



Fitness Motivation Monitor

Fitness Information and Inspiration



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Beating Exercise Boredom

It is the middle of winter and in most places the weather has been cold for months. If you are not someone who likes to exercise outdoors in the winter, you could be running dry on exercise options. But keep going! Consider these three ideas to beat exercise boredom and keep on track until winter thaws and the warm of spring arrives:

1. **Try a new exercise video.** Say the words "exercise video" and for many people images of Jane Fonda and leg warmers instantly appear. But a quick web search will leave those images far behind. Consider Budokon, a combination of martial arts, yoga, and meditation. Or Yoga Booty Ballet – the name alone can bring about a smile. The point is to do something different. Even if you exercise mostly at the gym, an at-home video option is good to have on hand when you cannot make it to the gym and need a quick workout.

While some stores (such as Costco or Target) carry exercise videos and DVDs, you will find a greater selection online at sites such as www.gaiam.com , www.collagevideo.com , or www.amazon.com .

2. **Make a small investment.** Home exercise equipment does not require an outlay of thousands of dollars. For cardiovascular exercise, check into a Lateral Thigh Trainer or mini trampoline (such as the Urban Rebounder) – each has been sold online and in infomercials, costing less than \$200. For strength training equipment, consider a Bosu or balance disc – both help to work your muscles in unique ways, focusing on balance and core strength.
3. **Get out of your gym comfort zone.** Do you tend to use the same treadmill (or other favorite) workout after workout? If so, switch to something different. Better yet, use a different machine each time you exercise. You can also use different machines within the same workout. For a 30-minute session, pick three machines and spend ten minutes on each. The time goes by fast and your body appreciates the variety. Also, if you use entirely machines for cardio, consider a class such as kickboxing or spinning. Stuck on classes? Try an elliptical trainer or walk uphill on a treadmill. The switch will limit boredom not only from a mental standpoint, but a physical one too because our bodies respond better when we vary the exercise stimulus.

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Message From The President

I am continually amazed and inspired at how our bodies respond to (and how our hearts are affected by) what we do, think, and eat – and don't do, think, and eat. Exercise versus sedentary living. Relaxation and appreciation versus ongoing stress and dissatisfaction. Eating intuitively and nourishing our bodies versus over-eating and mindless eating. The choices we make every single day (actually, each moment) affect our heart – and overall – health. You need not strive for perfection, rather a flow between these variables. This may mean that in times of excessive stress you find the will to exercise – and it helps to manage your stress. It can also mean that when your schedule is tight and your exercise program is limited, you continue to honor your body with food choices that serve you – ones that help to keep up your energy and maintain your weight. This flow is what keeps you on your game, so to speak. It is how we each live a healthy lifestyle, day-in and day-out. Happy heart month!



In health,
Heather Moreno



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Oh, Sweet Chocolate!

Valentine's Day brings to mind one thing – chocolate. (Okay. Jewelry, too.) If you received a box of chocolates from your Valentine, I have good news for you. Perusing the USDA website I found that chocolate has a higher Total Antioxidant Capacity than blueberries and spinach combined!

Antioxidants are thought to slow aging and prevent certain diseases (including cancer and heart disease) by protecting the body against compounds called free radicals. Free radicals develop in our bodies due to the normal metabolism (use) of oxygen and from environmental sources such as cigarette smoke, pollution, and chemicals. Our body has a process for removing free radicals from the body, but with the internal and external stressors placed on us, the body is not 100% efficient at eliminating these compounds. It needs dietary help.

In general, fruits and vegetables are high in antioxidants (more than grain-based products). They are a good source of fiber and other beneficial nutrients and are often less calorie dense than other foods (meaning fewer calories per volume of food). Exceptions would be avocados and dried fruit.

Back to chocolate. The antioxidant properties in chocolate come from the cocoa bean – the pure source of chocolate. As such, unsweetened baking chocolate has the highest antioxidant value. That is helpful for cooking, but not for a box of chocolates. To get the best antioxidant value from chocolate, the darker the better – most experts recommend 70% or higher cocoa value. Milk chocolate contains far less cocoa and more milk and sugar, significantly diminishing the antioxidant properties of the cocoa bean it starts with.

While dark chocolate beats spinach and blueberries in the Total Antioxidant Capacity category, it is more calorie dense and contains saturated fat. Looking at the label of an 88% bar, a 1 oz. portion (the entire bar is 3.5 oz.) is 143 calories, 77 (54%) of which are saturated fat. One cup of blueberries is only 83 calories and one-half gram of fat (no saturated).

While I will not rely solely on dark chocolate for my antioxidants, it's nice to know it helps!

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