

Eight Ways To Get Your Spouse to Work Out

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Getting regular exercise can be one of the most challenging things for many people to do. The only thing perhaps more challenging is trying to get our loved ones to do the same. We don't do it out of a sense of superiority, or a need to be bossy. We do it because it has been proven that exercise can lead to a sense of well being, a healthier life, and increased longevity.

Plus, let's face it, we want the person we married to be physically attractive. Chances are, they were (at least to us) when we married them. Why did that go by the wayside? Exercise is important, bottom line. This report will tell you some simple ways you can go about getting your spouse to exercise without seeming like a worrisome nag.

Be a Good Example

This is the easiest, and probably the most effective way to get your spouse out of the house and into the gym. It won't sound very convincing for you to implore your husband or wife to go work out while you're sitting on the couch eating a bag of Cheetos and watching afternoon television. You have to set the example.

People, especially men, are extremely competitive by nature. Even if you don't consider yourself or your spouse to be competitive, chances are they have a bit of that fire inside. Once they see you working out on a daily basis and making real changes to your body and your level of fitness, they will want to go and do likewise. No one wants to feel as though they are getting fatter and in worse shape while their spouse is the paragon of fitness. You don't have to lord it over them you don't have to say a word. All you have to do is walk the walk, make celebratory comments about your own progress, and watch the competitive spirit come out.

Of course, it's more than just competitive spirit. No one wants to start hearing (or even start thinking they are hearing) comments like, "What's she doing with him?" or "Man, he could do a lot better." Even if no one is saying these things, an unfit spouse married to a man or woman who clearly takes care of themselves is bound to start believing that others are thinking this. And, frankly, they probably are. This should serve as a rather bold incentive for them to put down the cheeseburger and pick up a dumbbell.

Be Subtle With Your Encouragement

One of the quickest ways to ensure your spouse never picks up a weight is to nag them about it day and night. Making fun of someone because of a weight problem, or bothering them about their lack of exercise at all hours will just make them grow to resent you. Assuming this is a relationship you want to continue, and you would like to have peace, love, and harmony in your household, this is not the way you want to go.

Still, there are ways to encourage your spouse to start getting active without coming off as an insufferable prig. One good way is to suggest the two of you take a walk after dinner. You could put it as, "I'm going for a walk, would you like to come join me?" This way, it comes off as a completely open ended invitation. They may or may not accept, but don't let failure discourage you. Ask again the next night, and the night after that. Make it seem as though you really just want the company on your walk (even if that's not entirely the case). Be patient, and be very careful never to cross the line into nagging.

Another way would be to invite them to come to the gym with you. You could offer to show them how the equipment is used, and say that you would find it so much easier if you had a loved one there with you. Make it about you, and you can neutralize the defensive posturing they are probably used to putting out there.

Be Creative

Who said exercise has to be boring. Perhaps that's what is stopping your spouse from really getting into it. Some people just can't handle the treadmill, for example. Not because of the strain it takes to make it a half hour, but because of the sheer ennui involved. No matter how good the playlist on your iPod, no matter how great the stuff is on TV at the gym, walking on a treadmill isn't the most fun activity in the world. If you can think of fun, active things you and your spouse can do together, you can be on your way to making some progress.

Of course, what might these things be? Well, there is really no end to the possibilities. You could go for a walk in a scenic location. You could play tennis together. You could also play basketball, racquetball or do swimming. You're only limited by your imagination (and the facilities you have access to). Get into your spouse's head and ask them to help you think of some things you guys might enjoy doing together.

Tell Them How You Feel

This, frankly, is a matter of last resort, and it can backfire, so caution and tact are highly advised when using this step. Still, it can make a world of difference if you play it right and if your spouse is of the personality to be affected. Don't make it about their physical appearance. Make it about their health. Express your concern about their health and fitness level and make it known that you want them to live to a ripe old age with you. If you put it this way, sometimes it can make a difference.

Beware, though. Anytime you use a method such as this, you're asking for defensiveness so you have to be ready. Whatever you do, don't let it spin out of control into an argument. If it turns into a battle, you've made your job harder, and maybe even impossible. You have to keep the setting neutral and the feelings soft.

Ask Your Spouse For Help

This is a great way to take the pressure off your spouse and turn it into something that is for your own benefit and not theirs--or at least for it to seem that way. A loving spouse will naturally want to extend a helping hand, no matter what the circumstances surrounding it are. So you can simply say that you don't "get" some of the machines at the gym, or you need a spotter, or you just can't bear the boredom and loneliness of working out on your own. Similar to some of the above suggestions, this makes them feel as though they are doing it as a favor to you, rather than making some big change to their own lifestyle. If you're lucky, they'll become hooked on the exercise long after they realize you probably don't need the assistance any longer.

Keep the Compliments Coming

If you are fortunate enough to get your spouse to start exercising, the key to longevity is to make them understand how well they are doing. This can be difficult, especially if you're struggling yourself to get into better shape and lose weight. Still, it is essential to make sure you compliment your spouse on how much better they look and how much you can tell the exercise has made a big difference.

Even if these things aren't strictly true, it will help them to keep their motivation up and continue in the process until they really do start to look better and feel better for themselves. A side benefit to this is that they will feel compelled to do the same for you, and everyone can use all the encouragement they can get when it comes to staying on the straight and narrow path of exercise and eating right.

Turn It Into a Competition

This will only work with the right type of personality mixture, but if you sense your spouse might be up for it, propose a competition. Set a date and make it a competition to see who can—for instance—lose the most weight by that time. It doesn't have to be pounds lost on the scale. It could be weight lifted on a certain exercise (with percentages taken into account to make up for the difference in a man and woman's strength, of course) or time on the elliptical machine. Whatever the goals, it can be a great incentive for both of you to keep at it when the going gets tough.

To sweeten the pot, make up rewards for the winner of the competition. While simply winning is usually enough to satisfy most people, it can still be fun to add in an interesting wager. The prize might be the ability to choose the next vacation destination, or simply plan a date night doing all of the winner's favorite things. Whatever the choice of prizes, the competition set up can lead to fun and camaraderie, as long as neither of you gets petty or overly competitive.

Learn To Accept It

This isn't what you wanted to hear, but sometimes it's the only way. If you've tried many of the things from this list, and nothing seems to have the slightest impact, you might as well give it up. Some people, for whatever reason, are dead set against the idea of getting up and getting active. It may not be healthy, and it may not be very beneficial to their appearance, but it is their choice.

If you've tried everything in the book without success, there comes a time when you have to stop beating your head against the wall and come to terms with it. If it's meant to be, your spouse will come around in their own good time. If not, then not. After a certain point, however, you cannot force someone to do something against their will, even if you know that it's best for them.

The Benefits of Regular Exercise

If you need some added ammunition in your fight to get your spouse to start working out, let's take just a moment and review some of the reasons why exercise is so important. Let's start with the body. This is, after all, the most obvious benefit. Regular exercise helps us to keep off unwanted, unsightly pounds, and helps us to fit into those jeans that many of our friends couldn't wear to save their lives. Put another way: exercise simply helps us to look better.

This may not be important to the 2% of people out there who put absolutely no value whatsoever on a person's physical appearance, but to the rest of the world, it's quite enough reason.

Of course, the other major reason is one of physical health. Study after study has proven that regular exercise is just what the body needs to stay fit and healthy. The human being has evolved over the years as an active beast. While modern times dictate that many of us spend most of our days in front of a computer and then much of our nights in front of a television, our bodies are far from adapting to this new lifestyle.

This is why it is such an unhealthy way to live. Compound that fact with the many unhealthy, processed, fatty foods we intake on a regular basis, and it's a recipe for health disaster. Exercise can stave off this process and get our bodies more in tune with what they were meant to be doing.

Finally, there is plenty of information out there about how regular exercise can improve our mental state. Cardio done with enough vigor and for long enough can actually release endorphins into the blood, giving us what has come to be known as "runner's high." Beyond that short term benefit, though, studies have shown that getting regular exercise and improving fitness levels can stave off serious depression and generally improve mood.

All of this is simply to say: exercise is good for you. Not doing it is bad for you. We learn this as early as kindergarten, but adults have a way of forgetting what they learned in the wee days of their youth. If your spouse has forgotten some of these lessons and seems content to become a couch potato, try some of the above techniques and see if they don't work. Don't just try a technique for a day or two and then give it up as a lost cause. Be persistent and then move on to the next technique. Eventually, you'll stumble upon one that works.

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