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Keep it going: According to experts, on an average, 50% of the people drop out of their fitness regimes

Itching to drop out?

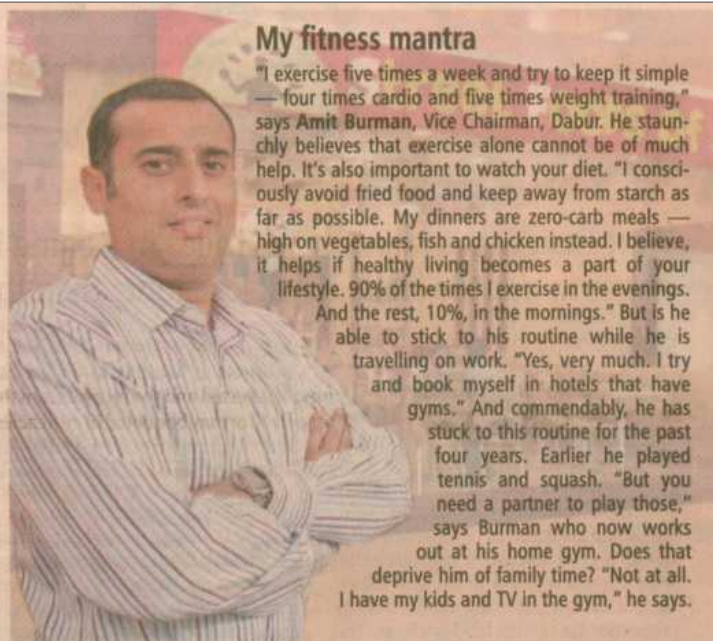
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There are several ways to keep yourself from dropping out of your fitness regime. Find out what experts have to say

Kiran Yadav

DETERMINATION can be a weak word. You may be 'determined' to shed a few extra kilos and get back into shape. But, a week later you'll find your motivation level nose-diving and instead of burning calories on the treadmill, you'd be feasting on French fries sans guilt. Some "find it difficult to find time to exercise", others "feel too tired to workout", and few others "drop out because their efforts yielded no results." Really, a dictionary of excuses could be compiled in no time.

"Research suggests that nearly 50% of the people who join a fitness programme tend to drop out," says Wellness Expert and Clinical Exercise Specialist Namita Jain in Mumbai. She explains the phenomena: "People promptly join a gym when they realise they need to lose weight. However, they don't anticipate the kind of efforts they would have to put in. Often personal trainers are not very sensitive to the clients' personality types. So, either the people can't relate to the exercise techniques or they tend to hurt



My fitness mantra

"I exercise five times a week and try to keep it simple — four times cardio and five times weight training," says Amit Burman, Vice Chairman, Dabur. He staunchly believes that exercise alone cannot be of much help. It's also important to watch your diet. "I consciously avoid fried food and keep away from starch as far as possible. My dinners are zero-carb meals — high on vegetables, fish and chicken instead. I believe, it helps if healthy living becomes a part of your lifestyle. 90% of the times I exercise in the evenings. And the rest, 10%, in the mornings." But is he able to stick to his routine while he is travelling on work. "Yes, very much. I try and book myself in hotels that have gyms." And commendably, he has stuck to this routine for the past four years. Earlier he played tennis and squash. "But you need a partner to play those," says Burman who now works out at his home gym. Does that deprive him of family time? "Not at all. I have my kids and TV in the gym," he says.

themselves. In either case more than often they just tend to drop out."

Sounds familiar? The idea then should be to engage with the personal trainer and also find the "fun element". Whether the aim is to lose weight or gain muscle there definitely will be a fun way of doing it. Celeb fitness trainer, Jeremy Cheong of Fitness First suggests an easy way of doing it, "get together a circle of friends who share the same interest. Peer influence plays an important role and will keep you

away from dropping out." It also helps to buy fitness books or surf the net to be clued in. It helps creating a conducive environment.

"The routine should not become monotonous. One, the human body reaches a plateau very soon and two; the effectiveness of a particular exercise fades away gradually. Try walking, swimming, yoga, pilates, hiking... anything that you'd like doing. "Even body builders don't just go and pump iron, there are a lot of other exercises they

indulge in," adds Cheong.

While that calls for adequate planning, it also calls for an informed beginning. "Identify a goal and work towards it. If you want to fit into a pair of jeans for the weekend picnic, hang it in a place where you encounter it everyday," says Sharon Arora, dietician G M Modi hospital. The goal better be realistic though. There's little point in trying to achieve the impossible. That done, "try and sustain your motivation level," says Dr Samir Parikh, psychiatrist, Max Healthcare.

Based in Delhi's upmarket Greater Kailash, fitness instructor Kiran Sawhney of the Fitnesolution fame has got the pulse right: "Fitness is the least important priority for most. For homemakers, it is children. For professionals, it's meeting deadlines. Others excuse themselves on the pretext of touring jobs... Fitness is the first thing to drop out of their schedules." But it is not a tricky problem to overcome. She suggests a practical approach. "Instead of driving down for an hour to hit a fancy gym, try finding a fitness centre closer to your place. Time is money for everyone. And if that's not possible, hire a personal trainer. Yes, that would work out to be a little expensive, but it'll be worth it," she says.

And if that doesn't work out either, try e-training. All you need is a web cam and a willing fitness trainer. Sawhney, for instance, charges Rs 3,000 for 30 online sessions. You can even ask your trainer to provide you with customised DVDs. Thinking of what excuse to come up with next?