

Five Ways to Help Clients Psych Themselves into Working Out

Getting started working out is the hardest part! When the ordinary Joe or Jane starts talking to fitness enthusiasts or coaches, they keep hearing the same things; how a good run is cathartic, a session of weightlifting gives the best endorphin rush, Pilates is a natural mood enhancer.

When they are sitting on the couch bingeing 'The X-Files' for the fortieth time, they might not be so keen on the idea of going for a jog, or coming into class. Even if the secret to making exercising easier is "Just do it!", and the fact is that the more they work out and run, the easier it will become to keep doing it, they haven't learned that secret yet, and it sounds like a bunch of hogwash.

So how do we motivate clients to work out in the first place? Everyone is unique, and different methods work for different people, so if one tip just doesn't feel useful, move on! Here are some ways to motivate your newest clients into making the choice to workout even when the promised endorphin rush feels like a lie.

1. **Make a contract.** Whether it's a verbal contract with friends, with their trainer, or with themselves, making a formal commitment something motivates people. Tell them to promise their jogging buddy a \$20 forfeit for not showing up for a scheduled run, or canceling without an ironclad excuse. Alternately, give them a "swear jar" – only make it a "skipped a workout jar."
2. **Reward systems work.** Don't skimp on the rewards! If the idea of an episode of Game of Thrones is your client's ticket to motivation, make them promise only to catch up on GoT after a workout – or while riding their exercise bike. (Remind those who love comfort food to use portion control when doling out rewards – that bag of Chinese food and carton of ice cream may sound fun, but they may pay for it later.)
3. **Think happy thoughts.** If your client's thoughts while running are various curse words and threats to inanimate objects, they may be thinking a little too negatively. Encourage them to combine an audiobook or inspiring music, and take those earbuds along on every hike or run to keep them positive and in the zone.
4. **Combine interests.** Have a dog? Taking him or her on a run could be the right track to take when convincing a client to get out. Frame it as a way to blend pet exercise with a human workout. A game of Frisbee in the park with a friend can also help them get their heart rate up in a fun, interactive way.
5. **Pay yourself.** Remember the jar from the first tip? If the jar starts to get too full, your client can make a promise to themselves to empty it productively. Run for three days in a row, and take out five dollars for a fancy coffee on Monday. There is nothing more inspiring than money, right?

Remember, advice counts when you are a personal trainer, so make sure your trainer insurance is

up-to-date before helping your clients psych themselves out.



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