

**DISCOVER
THIS
SURPRISING
NEW
INGREDIENT
FOR
EXERCISE
MOTIVATION**

Exercise motivation comes in many forms, from managing health conditions to wanting to look good for a high school reunion. Now, researchers have found an especially powerful resource by tapping into emotional memories.

A recent study found that asking people to remember previous workouts significantly increased the amount of exercise they did the next day. Happy memories had the strongest effect, but even unpleasant memories provided some inspiration.

Maybe you're struggling to stick with your aerobic classes or you just want an additional boost. Try these ideas for creating and using memories that will make you want to get moving.

CREATING MEMORIES FOR EXERCISE MOTIVATION

1. **Plan a vacation.** Play golf in Scotland or go scuba diving in the Caribbean. Bring home special memories that you'll love to revisit.
2. **Take the scenic route. Make the most of your surroundings at home.** Jog along a wooded trail in your local park. Play volleyball at the beach. Buy a colorful yoga mat.
3. **Engage all your senses.** Enjoy your workouts to

the fullest. Buy a soft fluffy towel. Play your favorite tunes.

4. **Make it social.** Everything becomes more unforgettable when you share it with others. Start a softball team at the office. Spend the weekend skiing with your family. **Find a workout buddy.** When someone else is counting on you, it's harder to make excuses when you've arranged to exercise.
5. **Pay attention.** It's difficult to recall many details about your time on the treadmill if your eyes are glued to a TV screen. Try activities that encourage more mindfulness, like Tai Chi.
6. **Challenge yourself.** Striving to reach ambitious, but feasible, goals builds happiness and self-esteem. Work with a tennis coach or increase the mileage on your morning run.
7. **Avoid injury.** At the same time, pleasant conditions provide the best motivation. Reduce your chances of getting burned out or sidelined by a sprained ankle or sore back. **Watch for signs of overtraining, and follow safety guidelines for any sport or exercise activity.**

USING MEMORIES FOR EXERCISE MOTIVATION

1. **Keep a journal.** Putting things in writing makes past events more vivid. Record significant moments so you can read them later.
2. **View pictures.** Images make a strong impression. Snap pictures with your phone or carry around a small digital camera so you can photograph yourself being active.
3. **Learn to visualize.** Conjure up a mental image of fun times and outstanding achievements. Picture how you looked spinning around on the dance floor or scoring on the basketball court.
4. **Break it down.** If you've ever studied for a test or memorized a long password, you know the value of dividing information into smaller chunks. Trace your workouts from warm up to cool down.
5. **Talk it over.** Solidify your memories by discussing them. Go out for coffee with your fitness buddy. It will give you both an opportunity to rehash your training sessions and benefit from each other's perspectives.
6. **Make a morning resolution.** You'll accomplish more by making frequent resolutions, rather than

waiting for New Year's. Start each day by forming an intention. Maybe you'll decide to swim laps during your lunch hour or sign up for tango classes.

7. **Review at bedtime.** Monitor your progress to stay on track and sharpen your memories. Set aside time to evaluate what's working for you and what you want adjust.
8. **Repeat and repeat.** Memories grow stronger with practice over extended time periods. **You're more likely to renew your gym membership if you give yourself regular reminders of all the benefits,** such as controlling your weight and toning your muscles.

Take a trip down memory lane the next time you're having trouble talking yourself into going to the gym. Memories can be one more tool for recharging your exercise motivation.