

Fall is a super season for shaping up

Here are 10 ways to start making the most of the season.

1. Take advantage of the weather. Fall can be a treat for the senses: the crisp air, apple picking, pumpkin carving, a gorgeous canopy of fall foliage, and the crunch of leaves underfoot. These months are a great time to exercise outdoors and enjoy cooler temperatures.

Walking, hiking and cycling are all awesome in the fall. Discover park trails and take in some new scenery, whether you're walking, biking, or in-line skating.

If you're near a lake, try kayaking or canoeing, for an excellent whole-body workout and a great change of pace.

And remember, it doesn't have to seem like exercise to be a great workout.

Raking leaves or doing some fall outdoor yard work is a great way to get the heart pumping, and it's a great calorie-burning activity.



2. Think outside the box. Always wanted to learn to tap dance? Attempt to box? Master the jump rope? Fall is a great time to learn something new. Many classes at gyms and elsewhere get started in the fall, so look around and see if something intrigues you.

3. Be an active TV watcher. Many people get geared up for fall premieres of their favorite television shows. If you're going to sit down and watch hours of TV, get moving. While you watch, you can walk or run in place, do standing lunges, do tricep dips off the couch, or lift weights. During commercials, do push-ups or sit-ups. In a one-hour show, you probably have close to 20 minutes worth of commercial interruption.

4. Integrate exercise into your life. You already know the obvious suggestions: park farther away from your destination; take stairs instead of elevators; take a walk during your lunch break. Here are a few that are less obvious:

- If you're spending the afternoon taking kids to soccer practice, instead of reading a book or visiting with another parent, why not walk around the outside of the field while they practice? Or (if you feel comfortable) warm up and cool down with the kids.
- You can even get moving while you get motivated -- for fitness or other life goals. Get some inspirational music or find a motivational talk and download it to your iPod. Walk while you listen for 30 minutes.



5. Rejuvenate yourself. Fall is the time to rejuvenate body, mind and spirit. Get a massage after your run. Learn to meditate. Take an art class. Treat yourself not just with exercise but other activities that promote wellness, so you can feel good physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

6. Remember the 30-day rule. It takes about four weeks for the body to adapt to lifestyle changes. That's why people who give up on their fitness programs tend to do so within the first 30 days. So, when the alarm goes off in the morning and it's darker and colder, don't roll over and hit the snooze button. Try to stick with a program for a month. After a month, behavior patterns will have adapted and it will be much easier to stick with it after that.

7. Strive for the 3 Cs. Commitment, convenience, and consistency-having all three will lead to a successful fitness program.

- First, exercise takes **commitment**. You have to start planning exercise, just like you do everything else, like meetings, dinners, and getting kids to lessons and practice. Put it on the calendar, because later always turns into never.
- **Convenience** means choosing a gym that's close by, or an activity you can do at home, or a time when you're not likely to be interrupted.
- Finally, there's **consistency**. Even if you can only work out for 10 minutes a day, be consistent.

8. Find your motivation. People are motivated by different things. It's important to first discover what your individual goals are, whether it's losing weight, strengthening and toning, or preparing for a race or event

But goals aren't enough to get you there; you have to be motivated by the day-to-day workouts. So choose something you'll enjoy doing and will be likely to keep up, whether it's walking or hiking with a friend, working with a trainer, or taking part in a "boot camp" class.

Creating a challenge for yourself will motivate you, as will encouragement and accountability.

