Why not exercise? Have you ever used these excuses?

- It takes too much time out of the day
- Gym memberships cost too much
- I don’t like to exercise
- I’m too tired and don’t have the energy
- I’m too out of shape to do anything
- I hurt too much
- There’s no one to do it with me
- I’m not sure what is best for me to do

With just 30 min/day of aerobic activity, you can:

- Increase the strength of the heart muscle so that more blood is pumped with fewer heartbeats and heart rate slows
- Improve flexibility of blood vessels so they can effectively adjust to changes in blood pressure, reducing the likelihood of pressure breaking off pieces of plaque
- Expand diameter of blood vessels to accommodate increased blood volume needed for muscular activity
- Create more blood vessels to transport blood, sometimes building arteries around blocked blood vessels (creating a natural bypass)
- Reduce inflammation response so plaque does not build in arteries
- Reduce blood pressure and therefore reduce risk for heart attack or stroke
- Utilize body fat for energy and increase metabolism, reducing weight and risk for obesity
- Increase utilization of insulin in the muscles and improving blood sugar regulation
- Strengthen your diaphragm allowing deeper breaths so your lungs can increase the volume of blood that can be oxygenated
- Regular aerobic training allows muscle cells to hold more oxygen, reducing the heart’s workload to oxygenate muscle
- Fit muscle cells have a greater capacity to burn fat as fuel, even at high intensities
Do you know these?

**Oxygen Debt**: When a body exercises at higher intensities than the cardiovascular system can deliver oxygen, this causes a deficit of oxygen. The debt is repaid when the body slows down but the breathing continues at a rapid rate (panting).

**Lactic Acid** If exercise intensity increases to where there is not enough oxygen (oxygen debt), pyruvate molecules are converted to lactic acid in an anaerobic process (without oxygen). If this builds in the blood, it can cause soreness.

**Glycogen** Another word for glucose used when stored in the muscle or liver.

**Hitting the Wall** This is the result of complete depletion of glucose (and glycogen) stores, bringing the nervous system to a point where continued exertion is extremely difficult, if not impossible. To avoid “hitting the wall”, aerobic exercisers maintain an intake of glucose throughout their extended activities.

**ATP** Adenosine Triphosphate is the fuel that facilitates muscular contraction. When this molecule is split, energy is released, causing heat.

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**Get Moving!**

- **Get Ready!** To motivate you, grab a partner, walk a dog or hire a personal trainer
- **Get Set!** Set your sights on a goal like a fun run, walk for a cause or count miles to reach a desired location like Las Vegas or Niagara Falls
- **Go!** A body in motion tends to stay in motion. If you want to get in shape, just start moving. Once you’re going, you’ll find it’s much easier to continue than it was to get off the sofa!

**Resources**

- American Heart Association  [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)
- Understanding Nutrition. Whitney and Rolfes. West Publishing

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