

get fit when you find your *me time*

Wake the kids, make breakfast, take the dog to the vet, off to work, help with homework, make dinner and do the laundry. The list of jobs and responsibilities goes on and on. What mom has time in her busy day to exercise? If you are feeling stressed and tired then maybe exercise is just what you need. Moms everywhere are looking forward to Mother's Day as the one day they can have a day all to themselves. You shouldn't have to wait for Mother's Day to do something good for yourself.

If your list of things to do seems never-ending then kick back, relax and read up on a list of exercise benefits. Research shows that exercise can relieve stress and increase endorphins. Endorphins are chemicals that are released in the brain during physical activity that can naturally elevate your mood, release tension and improve self-esteem. Not only can exercise leave us feeling happy and refreshed but it can also decrease the risk of osteoporosis and heart attacks. You'll burn calories and feel good about yourself when you fit into those favorite pants that have been hanging in your closet.

A fitness routine can actually increase your energy level along with keeping you mentally alert. Working out in a class or with a friend gives us the benefit of socialization. It also keeps us accountable. Keeping a date with a walking buddy or a friend you go to class with makes it more likely that you will keep that commitment. One of my students who takes a weekly semi-private Pilates reformer class with her daughter told me that this class was her "me" time. She said the class has been something that has become part of her weekly routine and that it's something she looks forward to doing with her daughter.

Finding the time to reap the benefits of exercise can be a stressful chore in itself. There are classes everywhere at different times to make it convenient for your schedule. If you simply can't find a class, then acquiring a personal trainer might be an option for you. It may cost you a little more but it will be money well spent. A private trainer will give you one-on-one attention and work with you according to your schedule. If cost is an issue taking a walk, hiking in the woods or doing sit-ups in your living room is a free energy booster.

If you simply don't like to exercise maybe you haven't found a type of exercise that is appealing to you. Explore what's out there. If you're not enjoying your daily or weekly class at the gym, it's possible you need to find a different instructor or different type of class. Always work with an experienced certified instructor.

After class I ask my students if they feel better than when they walked in the door. It's always a resounding "Yes!" When we look good, we feel good. There are a million excuses why you can't exercise. And there are a million and one reasons as to why you should.

Valerie Patrick is the owner and director of Fitness & Dance of CNY. She is a certified Pilates instructor and Level 5 YogaFit instructor. Valerie has an extensive fitness and dance background and over 25 years of teaching, performing and choreographing experience.

