

# FITNESS FEVER

**Discover some exciting fitness alternatives and get the mindset you need to stick to your exercise goals by understanding how to build good habits and reprogramming the way you think so healthy aspirations become reality.**

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**A**s we welcome the coming of spring, our clothing ensemble becomes lighter, making us more aware of our physical appearance. It's also the perfect time of year to skim through what we jotted down for our New Year's resolutions and see how far we've come and what, if anything, we've been resolute about. On the top of many lists is the usual: Get in shape. So you set up a plan, follow through for a couple of days out of the week in early January and then by mid-February you're back to old and unhealthy habits. By March, you're lamenting. Sound familiar? What distinguishes the individuals who do check off their list and stick to their goals, and those who fall short?

When it comes to wellness, experts agree that starting a healthy-savvy program that balances various aspects of your life simultaneously is key.

Is it about having a lack of discipline? And do we really have to perform an activity for 21 days for it to become a habit? The number 21 seems to be the code to unleashing the willpower we so desire. It sounds right out of *Indiana Jones* with a bit of Deepak Chopra thrown in. This has never been based on any reliable clinical research and the concept originated from the 1960s self-help book *Psycho-Cybernetics*, written by Maxwell Maltz.

The length of time it takes an individual to acquire a habit can vary. Habits are repeated patterns of behavior that become

## FITNESS 411

Get your dopamine pumping on full-throttle and make way for a fun work-out regimen that you can stick to by trying out one — or all — of these fitness alternatives.



### Sh'Bam

Similar to Zumba in its movements, Sh'Bam is done to chart-topping club and hip-hop music. It doesn't involve jazz hands but it does include having a good time and sweating the calories right off.



### Buti

Like yoga, Buti uses tribal music and a lot of hip swaying to get your workout off to a great start. The focus is on the core and, of course, the booty. You can sign-up for classes @ Iron Flower Fitness Miami.



### Cy-Yo

A workout that combines 10 minutes of yoga, with your usual breathing and stretching, followed by 40 minutes of indoor cycling to help burn calories while centering your energy. Check for nearest class locations @ Cy-Yo.com.

a print on our brain. How we conduct ourselves, everything we think and do is governed by impulses firing across synapses – the spaces between certain cells that guide communication throughout the brain.

A recent *European Journal Of Social Psychology* study entitled “How Are Habits Formed: Modeling Habit Formation In The Real World” states the range of time it takes a person to reach 95% of their asymptote of automaticity and form a habit is an average of 66 days. According to this study, missing the drill once in that amount of time would not be cause for alarm, though more than once could affect the outcome of acquiring that regime.

Many feel making a healthy change in their lives has a lot to do with willpower; and that not all of us have that ability. Some believe that the two main opponents we need to face, and that stand in the way of a healthier life and better physical state, are stress and boredom. Let’s address the first and then onto the latter. Stress is one of the top enemies of willpower. “When people are under stress, the sympathetic nervous system takes over, which is part of the basic biology that helps you with fight or flight,” says Dr. Kelly McGonigal. “Heart rate goes up and variability goes down. In contrast, when people successfully exert self-control, the parasympathetic nervous system steps in to calm stress



### **Fizzique**

This is basically a deep stretch that targets muscle conditioning, all while strengthening your core. Have you always envied a dancer’s body? Not anymore. You can register for classes @ Iron Flower Fitness Miami.



### **Trapeze & Lyra**

Spin, jump & straddle your way to an amazing body by using static trapezes and aerial hoops. Remember when you had dreams of running off with the circus? Now’s your chance. Classes available @ South Florida Circus Art School.



### **Booty Pop**

These classes focus on lifting and shaping the buttocks & legs. The workouts are done to hip-hop and there’s a lot of shaking and grinding to a killer body. You can search for classes @ Moulan Rouge Pole Fitness in Doral.



### **Aerial Circus Yoga**

As the name says, it combines aerial arts along with yoga and uses an apparatus known as a hammock for stretching and aerial tricks. You can attend classes @ South Florida Circus Art School.



and control impulsive action. Heart rate goes down, but variability goes up – contributing to a sense of focus and of calm.”

Luckily, there are many things you can do to conquer stress. Make sure you get a minimum of 8 hours of sleep every night; dedicate at least 25 minutes of aerobic activity [shorter bursts have a more powerful effect on your mood than longer workouts]; and put aside no less than 20 minutes each day for simple relaxation routines. You can do this via a leisurely walk around your neighborhood, meditation or journaling. Can you gift yourself this for a total of 45 minutes 6 days a week? Your mind, heart and soul need a daily dose of purging any toxic experiences or lodged negative feelings. This must be done daily, with just one day of down time.

Another factor that influences an individual's willpower reserve is what he or she eats. Out with processed food, and avoid altogether products that have refined sugar.

You can drastically improve your mood, and enhance your sleep by incorporating into your nutrition foods that are high in the neurotransmitter serotonin. Take for instance dark chocolate...it contains flavonols and antioxidants that promote better blood flow and increases the serotonin levels in the brain.

This does not mean to indulge constantly in large amounts of dark chocolate. Balance is important in every aspect of life; have a small portion a couple of times a week for the benefits and to keep your sweet tooth in check. Also include in your diet plan lean meats such as white fish, chicken along with vegetables high in folic acid like beets, spinach and broccoli.

Achieving better levels of wellness is not as hard as most might imagine, but it does take a conscious effort to make a change and stay consistent.

Now that we've addressed the hidden factors we sometimes overlook, as is the case of stress...it's time to move on to one that's a little tougher to overcome: boredom. Your body needs the routine of having a set amount of time allocated for exercise [at least 25 minutes, 6 times a week]. This doesn't mean you always have to do the same activity. There's a big difference between discipline and a forced routine that has you living a life of continuous boredom.

The way our brain's receptors react to the notion of adventure is having the limbic system reward us by releasing dopamine – a feel-good chemical in our bodies. Plus, we can fight the negative affects of boredom that eventually cramp our willpower by keeping our workout options new, exciting and diverse.

In today's modern world, it's easier than ever to get started toward a healthier life. There's a wide variety of fitness options and ways to stay within a budget, including taking advantage of websites that offer deals like Groupon, CoupTessa, LivingSocial, DEALtificate and so forth. You can find offers on a daily basis that usually include either a month of unlimited fitness classes or a package of several classes. Go from Zumba one month to Acroyoga the next, and it's a great way to discover a new facility in your area, have the opportunity to venture into a part of town you've never been, or even better – make new friends as you become a more fabulous version of yourself inside and out. **KB**