Step it Up

"One More Block"

So you're ready to take your exercise sessions to the next level but not sure how to do that, eh? You're in a bit of a rut, doing the same thing, getting minimal results. Remember, with exercise, change is good. Your body has a tendency to adapt to a program that's repeated again and again and improvements wane. So get out of your comfort zone and do something different. Step up your workouts with some simple changes.

One of the benefits of a personal trainer is she pushes you harder than you would normally push yourself. But you ***can*** do it yourself! Try one of these techniques for jump starting your ticker:

1. If you usually walk, jog for 30 seconds every five minutes. Listen to your body. Only do this if you've been walking for several months consistently. But when you up it to a jog your heart rate will jump too.

2. If you are riding an exercise bike or using any other cardiovascular fitness equipment, increase the intensity for 30-60 seconds every 3-5 minutes. You can do it!

3. "One more block" is a great excuse to lengthen your exercise session. When you're running, often you're sure you can't run another mile - or even ½ mile. But one more block? Sure! Before you know it you've gone 2 or 3 more blocks before calling it quits.

4. Karaoke - This is a training technique for improving agility and balance. While you're out walking, for a minute or more face sideways and do the cross step. Left foot crosses in front, right foot steps out to the side. Left foot crosses in back, right foot steps out to the side. Left foot front - step - left foot back - step. Faster. *Left foot front - step - left foot back - step.* Swing your arms. Faster still. ***Left foot front - step - left foot back - step....***

Head up. Chin up. Abs tight. Twist those hips. Not only will you engage your core doing this little dance but you'll spice up your walk and make a lot of people giggle watching you!

Step it Up Strategy #5 - ***Leap!***

This is a great lower body workout and elevates your heart rate without you having to dramatically increase your pace. OK, you ready? Take two steps, then LEAP for a step. Right, left, LEAP! Left, right, LEAP! Right, left, LEAP! Left, right, LEAP! To make it more fun, leap over sidewalk lines. Leap up on to curbs. Leap over trash cans. (Well, maybe you'd better practice your leaping for awhile before attempting trash cans...) But the point is, this makes your walk way more interesting and absolutely raises your heart rate. You'll definitely be using the "one more block" technique because that may be all the leaping you have in you!

Step it Up #6 - Add strength

We've discussed how lunges are such a great lower body exercise you can do anywhere. Adding strength training pieces to your cardiovascular workout doubles the benefit, doubles the fun. (Add Wrigley and ... never mind...) So stop along your course and:

1. Do dips off a bench or wall.
2. Drop for 10 (push ups).
3. "Walk" down the street doing lunges.
4. Savor the sweet smell of grass while doing crunches.
5. Picking up trash along the way is great utilization/coordination of your upper/lower body.
6. Do a yoga pose pause.
7. Stairs are your friend. Approach with vigor, but step up slowly & intentionally vs. moving with momentum.
8. Move with motivating music.

With a little creativity, moving really can be fun.

Live Life Well.

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