

## Fitness Article:

# The Power of Five Minutes

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No, this isn't one of those "Get fit in just five minutes!" pitches. As seductive a concept as that may be, I think we all know deep down that it takes a heck of a lot more than just five minutes to see measurable changes in our bodies, though it should also be pointed out that those same changes often require mercifully less than the 60-90 minutes often touted by researchers. Still, don't be quick to dismiss the potential power in a "mere" five minutes. Use those minutes wisely, and you stand to reap benefits far beyond the number of calories burned during that time.

First of all, while I myself am fortunate enough to have always loved to exercise, to train my body hard and challenge my muscles in all sorts of ways, even I have those days when I feel uninspired to workout. I'll think about the drive to the gym, the dash from my car in the cold air, the walk to the locker room, changing clothes, hiking upstairs to the cardio section.... and at that moment find zero appeal in the prospect of following through with any of it. But I have learned over the years that if I can just talk myself into those first five minutes, the rest falls into place almost effortlessly. My workout takes on its own momentum, and I soon find myself both grateful and happy that I went through with my training. And I can honestly say, I have never left such a workout thinking (if I may be frank), "Gee, I was right. This sucked. I should have skipped out of this." On the contrary, I'm always relieved that I didn't let those barrier thoughts prevent me from following through with my regular exercise. In fact, some of my best workouts have come out of that very humble start! These are the kind of mental tricks you need to keep in your arsenal, because there will be those times when you just plain don't want to eat right, or to exercise, or go to the store because you're out of an item that's part of your planned menu for the day, even though you know you'll feel better and/or advance yourself closer to your goal as a result.

But wait! There's more! The other reason I'm a strong proponent for the "five minute" plan is.... the vital role of consistency in any fitness program. It's a given that our schedules will sometimes leave us unable to do as long a workout as we'd like. But rather than skip the workout altogether, I encourage you to follow through with SOMETHING. Anything. 15 minutes. 10 minutes. Yes, even five minutes. Why? Because by keeping exercise on your daily schedule, you'll have the habit in place for when your schedule does finally open up. Skip your workout, and now you don't even have the reinforcement of a familiar task for when you do have the time to exercise. And we all know how tough it is to get a habit going – the only thing harder is getting rid of a bad habit, and we are often in the daunting position of having to tackle both at the same time. Why not help yourself avoid such a dilemma by sticking to some form of your plan even when time isn't on your side, thus paving the way for better success when your schedule is ready?

Ah, but there's a bonus even beyond the above two points. And that is, the domino effect. Or the snowball effect. It really is true, when you're attending to one part of your fitness – be it healthy eating, physical activity, or something else, you're much more likely to make better choices in other areas as well. By keeping a "foot in the door" with your exercise, you'll help to keep yourself focused towards choosing clean foods over junk. Try it – it works! Again, it's very much a mind game. Let go of it all, and it's very difficult to reverse that momentum. Keep hold of at least something conducive to good health and fitness, and you're much more likely to bounce back after times of less-than-stellar eating. Remember, never give up – keep that commitment to do something positive every single day, and success will come, albeit slowly and gradually!

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