



STAY IN, WORK OUT

With a new year come New Year's resolutions. Many will resolve to make physical fitness a priority in the coming year, a goal more easily achieved at the gym or when you have a home gym — which you can have, no matter where you live or how little space is available.

Those living in condominiums are fortunate, as many condos offer fitness facilities just an elevator-ride away. But condo gym-goers and regular gym-goers still share an all-too-common problem: lacking the energy to actually go. Here are some tips to help get those suffering from inertia into the gym:

- Overcome the intimidation factor by familiarizing yourself with the equipment. The gym staff may help by providing equipment orientations. At the very least, written instructions on how to use each piece should be available.
- Keep your workout gear in your car so you can head straight to the gym from work or your condo's parking garage. Try to avoid going home first — once you're at home, finding the motivation to leave again can be difficult.
- Find a workout buddy who can help motivate you, and make your workout more enjoyable. If you don't already know someone, consider approaching a regular gym-goer, or post a notice in your condo building or a bulletin board at the gym.
- Hire a personal trainer. A trainer will motivate you and push you to do your best. Ask your gym or condo's recreation staff — they will be able to put you in touch with a personal trainer.

But what if you're not in the position to join a gym, or your condo doesn't have a gym or you prefer to exercise in private? No problem! You can set up a home gym, whether you have a whole room to spare or just the corner of one.

The largest piece of equipment in your gym will be your cardio component: treadmill, stationary bike, elliptical trainer, or rowing machine, for example. If you're starved for square footage, take note: elliptical trainers have relatively small footprints; there are folding treadmills that collapse for storage; upright stationary bikes consume less space than recumbent bikes. If you're really squeezed for space, jump ropes are great for cardio, but a poor choice where impact noise is an issue. Alternatively, stationary bikes are a great option where impact noise is a concern.

For strength training, invest in a set of free weights, an exercise ball (aka a stability ball), a set of resistance bands, and a mat, all of which take up little space and can be easily stored out of sight — and are relatively inexpensive, to boot!

A few cautionary words: Before undertaking any fitness program, consider consulting your doctor, especially if you have a history of any medical condition. And be sure to spend 10 minutes warming up and cooling down before and after your workout, incorporating a stretching routine, in order to help prevent injuries.

