

Maintaining fitness in a pandemic

With gym closures, colder weather, and the rise in COVID-19 cases, it may be more challenging to motivate yourself to exercise.

There are many people who welcome the gym closures, thinking they will pick up where they left off once local businesses are allowed to resume normal operations. These individuals are forgetting that muscle shrinks after four days of not using it. So if you've taken a four-week — or for some of us — a four-month break, we shouldn't expect to have the same strength we worked for before the pandemic shutdowns.

"One of my greatest fears is people will return to the gym and think they can lift the same amount of weight or run at the same pace. This train of thought will lead to injury, either acute or chronic," said Sweat PNW owner, Ashlee Francis

The best way to prevent risk of injury is to maintain or even improve your current level of activity. Several individuals and families have already done this, creating home gyms and finding online workouts to follow. This is a great first step, but without a professional monitoring, there is still a huge potential for injury due to poor form, or trying to lift too much, too soon.

It's also more difficult for many

people to self-motivate.

Local gyms offer more than just fitness equipment; there is a sense of accountability and community built at the gym.

"Practicing together from home during these uncertain times not only helps to keep our minds and bodies healthy, grounded, and calm — but also allows us to stay connected as a community. Our students are still able to say hello to their friends, check in on each other, and stay in relationship with their teachers and their practices regardless of where they are. This last year has been filled with so much heartbreak and isolation, so being able to continue to move and breathe together as a community has been the greatest gift," said Kari Anton, owner of Life.Love.Yoga.

For many people, the gym is their home away from home. They rely on their workouts for a sense of self-worth and for the connection they build with other gym goers, helping them feel like part of a team.

Ryan Hudson, owner of Level 5 CrossFit, said, "Taking people's gyms away has literally taken away their lifeline to staying sane in this crazy world we now live in, so people *must* workout now more than ever, even if they can't access an indoor gym. It will help fight depression and mental

illness as well as the current pandemic and the far-more deadly obesity epidemic. You can't get fit and healthy by doing just one workout but you can fix your mental state with just one."

Exercise is an important tool for fighting depression, loneliness and weight gain. It produces energy, improves sleep and increases immunity.

"An exercised body lends to a resilient mind and spirit in times of turmoil. It's hard to work out, it's not easy but doing so one can appreciate their own accomplishment, and carry their attitude into other avenues," said Andrew Loscutt, trainer at Sisters Athletic Club.

Each day is a new opportunity to engage in physical activity like a brisk walk, strength training, yoga and bodyweight calisthenics. Exercise leads to short- and long-term benefits for mood, sleep, and overall health.

Stay committed to your health during gym closures

1. Create a plan. Writing out a plan for what activities to do on which day, with a duration or amount of sets and reps, can help keep people on track. Ask a local fitness professional to design a workout specific to your goals and one which accommodates your schedule.

2. Plan on taking two or three fifteen-minute walks each day. It won't take much effort, but the benefits of fresh air, movement, and a change of scenery will help improve your mood and energy levels.

3. Support your local gym owners by attending classes! Here are some of our local gyms and the options they have available during the mandated closure:

- **Sisters Athletic Club:** streaming yoga, body sculpt and meditation classes with hopefully more to come
- **Life.Love.Yoga.:** daily online yoga and barre classes, outdoor classes, private classes and yoga therapy
- **Level 5 CrossFit:** 24-hour outside gym access (2,000 sq. ft. covered and secured space with access to cardio machines, free weights and more), semi-private small group CrossFit or weightlifting training and daily home-workout, app-based training
- **Sweat PNW:** daily online HIIT, stretching, strength training and Pilates classes with guidance on form and correct movement patterns, private training and nutrition counseling.

The options are limitless when it comes to home workouts, but maintaining a community of like-minded individuals, being held accountable by a trainer and creating the motivation to start and, more importantly, complete a workout may prove to be more challenging.



Your Care

These times have shown us that nothing is more important than maintaining our health. Your Care stands ready to help the Sisters community do just that, with urgent care available every day.

Dr. Eric Wattenburg urges patients not to delay being seen out of fear of COVID-19.

Located in the copper-top building just off Highway 126 in Redmond — they offer easy and safe access in and out of their facility. Make sure that you stay well by seeking help for ailments before they get more serious. Your Care continues to offer a full complement of health services.

Your Care has the vision to be proactive. This season, it is especially important to protect yourself by getting a flu shot.

Your Care is committed to helping local businesses keep their employees healthy through ongoing occupational medicine programs. It's all part of a long-term commitment to service and the health of the community.

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