



Fitness Facts

Use Your Imagination: Top Tips For Preventing Workout Boredom

(NAPSA)—You’ve made the commitment to fitness. You joined a gym or bought some home exercise equipment. Maybe you’ve even invested in some high-concept exercise shoes. The real test of motivation, however, lurks just around the corner—boredom. Perhaps as much as chocolate and pizza combined, boredom is the great enemy of physical fitness, particularly for people whose primary cardiovascular exercise is through stationary bikes, treadmills and cross-trainers.

Imagination can make all the difference between boredom and motivation. Whether you go to a gym or work out at home, it’s not unusual to imagine riding or walking through exotic destinations while pumping away at a stationary bike or treadmill. To celebrate the production of the 500,000th Lifecycle exercise bike, Life Fitness, the bike’s manufacturer, asked 1,000 people which city in the world they’d most like to tour on a Lifecycle bike.

Among the respondents, 54 percent were humming “America the Beautiful.” They looked no futher than the United States for their preferred city to pedal around, with New York being the No. 1 choice.

The second favorite city was Paris, perhaps chosen by would-be daredevils who picture themselves dodging the frenetic traffic around the Arc de Triomphe.

Tied for third were London, with its breathtaking history and serene parks, and San Francisco, which boasts ocean views and lung-taxing hills. Rounding out the



top ten were Rome, Seattle, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Chicago, Denver and Sydney.

Envisioning yourself cycling through an interesting city while on a stationary bike is an excellent tactic to combat cardio boredom. Kerri O’Brien, owner of KAObFit, a fitness/wellness resource company based in Phoenix, encourages multi-tasking—let your body get some cardio while you amuse your mind with diversions such as reading, watching TV, listening to music or books on tape, or catching up with a friend.

She also recommends using the time for mental as well as physical exercise. Visualize the completion of a challenging task, think of creative solutions to problems or brainstorm about business ventures, home improvements, vacation and holiday plans, or dietary changes to complement your exercise regimen.

“It’s a great opportunity to really use your brain muscle while all of that blood is pumping,” says O’Brien.

One newer diversion is surfing the Internet. Some health clubs are beginning to add Internet connections, together with television and radio, to their cardiovascular equipment. You might raise your heart rate as much through finding great deals on the Web as through a cardio workout.

A different tactic for combating boredom is to really focus on your body as you exercise rather than going on automatic pilot. Dale Huff, R.D., C.S.C.S., co-owner of NutriFormance, a personal training and nutrition company in St. Louis, recommends monitoring your heart rate while doing cardio.

“A heart rate monitor will keep you more interested in your body’s exercise response and will encourage you to work a little harder,” he notes. He also recommends mixing up your exercise routine, using different machines, tapes and classes and taking advantage of good weather for outdoor exercise.

Equally as important as regular cardio exercise is active recovery from it to prevent burnout. Huff adds, “You should plan to take an active recovery day or two each week, as well as a recovery week or two each year. During that time off from your fixed cardiovascular program, enjoy other recreational activities,” such as group sports, strength training, hiking, or simply strolling and enjoying the scenery.

Whatever tactic you choose, battling boredom in workouts is the best road to fitness—regardless of what imaginary city that road runs through.