

## Learning to Love the Process “Wellness Matters”

By Lisa Schilling

Building purposeful movement into your daily routine is a vital part of your lifetime wellness plan. Only you can decide what that purposeful movement will be. Find activities that you enjoy doing and schedule time to do it daily. This may be seasonal. You might walk inside or ride an exercise bike during the winter months and then perhaps you garden, work in the yard, or walk outside when the weather is warmer.

Create your plan to incorporate purposeful movement into your schedule, but branch out as new opportunities arise. Some people like routine and need repetition to stay on track. Others need to change it up regularly to remain interested. You may choose a variety of exercises to create your process. The main considerations being, to think about moving all the time, choose a style that works for you, and structure your day to accommodate it.

The traditional way people look at exercise makes it become a form of drudgery. Reawaken to the fact that you can move just for the FUN of it. It is important to create positive associations with movement. When you have a pleasant memory of movement, you are more likely to do it again.

It is vital that you enjoy the process, not just desire the outcome. Commit yourself to an active lifestyle and not just an exercise program. By using what you already know about yourself, you can improve your results.

Creating awareness about moving is essential. A pedometer is a tool that can help you monitor your daily movement. It can help detect the need to increase daily movement or provide maintenance feedback. A healthy goal is 10,000 steps per day. Start out by seeing what you log in a normal day, and then begin to purposefully add 500 to 1,000 steps per day until you reach your goal.

Research shows that you can shed sixteen to eighteen pounds a year by creating a *daily* habit of walking for half an hour in your

target heart rate zone. This weight-bearing exercise also stimulates the mineral content to remain in the bone structure and thus reduces age-related bone loss, known as osteoporosis.

This kind of active movement triggers your survival response—meaning you often lose weight faster as your body feels it must lighten the load to facilitate future activity. The body was once trained to sense activity as a need to flee from danger. This caused it to release fat storage so you could flee faster and thus survive. It is important to stop associating exercise with just calories burned. I can see, if that was the only benefit you obtained from exercise, how defeating that would be.

Active movement does many things beyond burning calories. It releases endorphins that make you feel good, and it also signals your body to start working more efficiently. It turns off fat-storage hormones and signals the release of energy for you to complete needed tasks. You will also continue to burn calories at higher rate after you are done exercising. It basically unlocks the door to how your body functions.

When the body is in fat-storage mode, it tries to conserve energy. Because the body was once designed for the survival principle, it sensed long famines and would store fat for survival during that time. The body now sees a “diet” greater than seventy-two hours as a possible famine, and this triggers it to store fat and conserve your energy.

Through the release of fat-storage hormones, your body is hardwired for prehistoric survival. The only problem is, we do not live in the Stone Age and we have an overabundance of food choices. The simple act of initiating active movement can be enough to signal the body to release fat. It will then give you the energy you need.

When the body feels that its very survival is based on you being able to flee from danger, it will give you what you need to do that. That means having energy and getting leaner. When you look at it that way, the process of exercise is very worth your time.