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Get fit enough

Adjusting the fitness bar

BY KIMBERLEE BETHANY BONURA

AS YOU WRITE your New Year's resolutions, shift your perspective about fitness: Instead of striving for perfect fitness, this year decide you will get fit enough for your life.

"The first and most important issue underlying the meaning of fitness is the question 'Fitness for what?' The answer is person-specific," says David Pargman, an emeritus professor of educational psychology at Florida State University.

Exercise can improve many things in your life. Which one is the motivator that matters to you? As Sonia Satra, founder of

A fit-enough plan

Every hour:

- Move for two minutes; incorporate movement throughout the day.
- Do a posture check: Strengthen your back and core muscles with good posture.

Every day:

- Do two minutes of deep breathing.
- Walk 10 minutes after each meal.

—KBB

making, clarity, creativity, relationships, emotional well-being—the list goes on. Would you work on your relationship for 10 minutes a day? Or move for 15 minutes if it would give you a brilliant idea for business? Then exercise for that purpose."

Satra encourages people to start small

to achieve realistic success: "Ask, 'What if I knew 10 to 15 minutes of exercise was exactly the right amount of exercise, then what would I do?'"

A small amount can make a big difference. Research from the Mayo Clinic found that a 30-minute walk after dinner reduced glucose levels in people with diabetes. A study from Arizona State University showed that taking three 10-minute walks daily lowers blood pressure. One study found that just two minutes of deep breathing exercises per day reduced stress and improved quality of life.

Once you start moving, the best way to keep moving is to find a fitness activity you enjoy. According to Costco member Judy L. Van Raalte, professor of psychology at Springfield College in Massachusetts, "We spend a lot of time on thinking. But a lot of what we do is based on feeling. If what we do feels good, we are more likely to do it. If we exercise in a way that feels good for us, it is more likely to happen."

Broaden your perspective of fitness. Fitness can happen at the gym, but it can also come from dance classes, walking the dog, swimming or playing with the grandkids. Activities of daily living—vacuuming, gardening—all add up to moving more. Be creative. Find a way to move that feels good to you, both mentally and physically, and you're more likely to keep moving.

Remember that "engaging in healthy behaviors is a better predictor of overall health than weight," according to Christine Selby, a licensed psychologist, sport psychology consultant and eating disorder specialist.

Let go of the external pressure of the scale, your pants size or the mirror. To see results, "focus on how you feel," says Selby. "Is it easier for you to climb stairs than it was a week ago, or cover more ground in the same amount of time? These things tell you that what you are doing is working. Your energy levels and mood are also likely to change with regular exercise; have you noticed a change there?"

In *Boomerise: Exercising as You Age* (Fitness Info Tech, 2011; not available at Costco), Pargman advises readers to consider the three S's: "Be smart, sincere and safe." Selby offers similar advice: "Be patient with and kind to yourself."

A fitness plan that's fun, that feels good and that makes you feel good about yourself: That's when exercise becomes self-care—and the best gift you can give yourself. That's fitness for your life. **C**

Costco member Kimberlee Bethany Bonura (drkimberleebonura.com) stays fit enough for her life through walking, yoga and chasing her kids on the playground.

OUR DIGITAL EDITIONS
Click here for a video on good posture exercises. (See page 14 for details.)

Moticise: Fit Mind, Fit Body (*moticise.com*), puts it, "The biggest change in the perception of exercise is the meaning you give it. Scientifically, we know 10 minutes of movement can make huge shifts in so many areas: confidence, energy, decision-