

Introduction



Sometimes it's hard to find motivation to do things.

Sometimes we start and then after a while we find better things to do.

Some people think we have motivation to begin with. That is accurate but the amount of motivation we have each day is quite small - we need to build and foster motivation. A good analogy is a power station. It doesn't just have power - it creates it. Just like ourselves, we need to generate motivation.

You create motivation and you can create it anytime you want.

Motivation is the feeling that you can accomplish anything. When you fight against your brain that is when your motivation takes a dive. Once you start playing by your brain's rules, getting motivation isn't so hard.

How many times have you set goals like "lose 20 lbs" only to fall off the wagon.

Why?, because in most cases you are confronted with a "gap" between the person you are and the person you want to be. That can be daunting. You are concentrating on the goal and your brain starts to protect you by giving you reasons why you can't achieve it.

Your brain naturally protects you against change or getting out of your comfort zone.

3 Brains



The brain can be represented by 3 different levels.

The very basis and most animalistic is what I call the 'reptilian' brain. This is the brain which is concerned with survival, eat, sleep, fight or flee - you get the picture. This is very selfish and you can usually recognise this part of the brain because it comes up with excuses like: too tired, too hungry, it's too comfy on this sofa etc.

The next part is what I call the paleo-mammalian bit - this is concerned with emotions, feelings, empathy for others etc. This bit is concerned about what others feel or think. This usually comes up with excuses like: no point in going to the gym cos I look too fat in those shorts etc.

The last part is the neo-mammalian bit. This is concerned with higher thinking. Your initial thought to do something could come from any part of the brain - but usually comes from this last part.

Whenever you have inner conflict - it is usually these three parts arguing with themselves. This arguing reduces motivation and will power.

Will Power



We have evolved to rest whenever possible - so the Reptilian part always wants to conserve energy and it usually the laziest part.

So, how do we beat this inbuilt desire to rest?

Will Power.

Think of your brain as the house of commons. Each part of the brain has a number of members who are speaking all at the same time. One part suggests a motion and the other parts agree or disagree with it.

All this arguing reduces motivation and will power and so you want a resolution as quickly as possible. The best way to do this is to activate and use the neo-mammalian part of the brain quickly and effectively

Energy



All this thought and bickering takes energy. Take for example the shuttle. It has several different types of energy...

1. booster rockets

These are big and are designed to get the space shuttle out of the earth's gravitational pull. They only burn for a few minutes and are jettisoned after they have burnt out.

2. Smaller impulse engines

These are smaller and enable the shuttle to keep moving in space, adjust course and start the fall back to earth.

Activation energy is like the booster rockets - you need a good boost of energy to initially get off your arse. The energy it takes to get you moving is quite a lot compared to the energy needed to keep you moving.

Your neo-mammalian brain usually comes up with an idea to go to the gym - immediately you can hear the other two parts of your brain giving you reasons not to.

We usually start off each day with a little Will Power, this is the most precious energy we have and it enables us to overcome the other two parts of the brain if used correctly - but most of us use this energy on inner conflicts trying to justify doing 60 minutes workout.

Think of Will Power as a mobile battery, the things which drain this battery are perceived effort and perceived difficulty. If something looks like a lot of effort or seems quite difficult then our will power will drain more quickly - even if it isn't that hard.

Have you heard the expression "I didn't feel I could do xxxx, but once I got started it was ok"?

5 Minute Workout



The trick is to make yourself think that a task is easy or simple and your will power will go a lot further. You need to be careful though - your brain is no fool - don't pretend to do a 5 minute workout with the thought of doing 60 mins - your brain will latch onto the 60 min workout.

If you say, I'm going to do 60 minutes workout - you immediately feel pressure from the other two brains. This maybe ok if you are full of beans and energy and can battle through the lack of will power - but forcing your brain to do something is not very good long term.

If you say you are going to do 5 minutes - then it almost seems too easy - your other brains have no legs to stand on - anyone can do 5 minutes - it is easy and simple and so there is more chance of you doing it. When you start your 5 minutes - your energy levels get higher and you might actually do 30 or 40 minutes anyway. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT IS NOT YOUR INTENTION TO DO 40 MINUTES - ONLY COMMIT TO 5. IF YOU GET THERE AND YOU ONLY DO 5 - THEN THAT IS SUCCESS - DON'T FEEL GUILTY - THAT IS OK.

It is more important to do 5 minutes 3 times a week than an hour once - sometimes. You might end up doing 60 minutes during each session - but the intention has to be 5 mins.

If you are at the gym and you have done your 5 mins, and feel you want to do more - don't think - right I've got 50 mins - and therefore start planning for 50 mins. Just take it as it comes. Plan for the next 5 or 10 - so your gym session needs to be the initial 5 minutes plus a series of additional 5 minutes. Each extra 5 mins is a separate decision - only do them if feel you can.

Doing it this way - the workout becomes habitual.

The key is super small workouts and routine. There must be no requirement to exceed your 5 minute workout - but if you feel you can then ok.

Mini Workout



There may be times when you have off days and you don't have the will power to do a 5 minute workout.

You could do a mini-workout.

This is a super small version of a 5 minute workout.

It could be just to drive to the gym, get changed, do 2 minutes push ups.

If you hear yourself saying "I'll do it later" - this is when you might want to consider a mini workout.

The important thing is that you get out of the house and down to the gym even if you don't feel like it. Being regular and consistent is the key. If you miss one day - the next time it will be 2 and so on.

Planning Workouts



Start off by planning your full workout.

Then - compile a 5 minute workout based on the full.

This needs to be super simple and attainable even at your lower ebb.

Then - compile a mini-workout.

Workout what you are going to do for this one. It might be only to go to the gym and get changed. - maybe it is running for 2 mins.

Goals



Goals are great but be careful that they do not have a negative impact.

People are motivated by results and achieving goals.

It is ok to have a final goal - get down to 11 stone etc. But these just need to be milestones. Try to have several mini-milestones rather than one final one. Also - try to distinguish actual goals from incidental goals.

For example - running 10 miles a day for 5 days each week - you will lose weight and get closer to your goal weight - but this is a by-product of running 5 days a week - you can't control how much weight you lose - but you can control how often you go to the gym.

So - your final goal might be to get down to 12 stone.

This month's goal might be to lose 10 lbs.

This week's goal is to go to the gym 3 times a week.

You can measure the last one and control it - so you will get motivated from this. You might lose 10 lbs in the month - you might not - so keep it as a target but don't get disappointed if you do not attain it yet .

Rules



Very, very important rules....

1. BE HAPPY WITH ALL PROGRESS

Don't feel guilty just doing a 5 minute workout in the middle of the week.

A 5 minute workout is all you are committed to.

NEVER EVER EVER CHEAT - your brain will find out and your motivation will take a dive.

Do not increase your 5 minute workout - it is there for a reason - it is your booster rockets to get you started - you don't need any more.

2. KEEP GOING

If you feel a bit of resistance after your 5-minute workout - then use this technique to do another 5 minute workout - and keep going. If you feel great resistance - try a mini workout. If you still feel resistance - finish - but never feel guilty.

3. SMALL STEPS ARE KEY

Your steps need to be too simple - so that your brain has no argument for not doing it.

It seems too simple to not bother then it is ok.

The idea is that you will generate more will power during your 5 minute workout and it will keep you going for longer - before long you will have done an hour and not even realised it.

Even if you have no will power left - you always have enough for 1 more pushup