

## What's stopping you?

You know that exercise is beneficial, but you just can't get started... Here are five of the top excuses, quashed!

'I'm self-conscious'. It's natural to feel a little self-conscious about exercise, but there are plenty of ways you can reduce those feelings. Perhaps you can exercise with a friend or partner instead of going it alone? That way, it'll be more fun as well as providing moral support. Choose clothes you feel comfortable in – you don't have to dress up in Lycra! If you are exercising in a public place, such as a gym or local park, you could choose quieter times of day when there are fewer people about, or why not exercise at home? There are plenty of inexpensive pieces of home exercise equipment, and your local library should have a range of exercise DVDs and books to browse.

'I haven't got time.' Many of us leave busy, active lives with work and family commitments, household chores, getting around and social activities filling our diaries. But as far as exercise is concerned, it's about taking time, not making time. Exercise can help maintain and improve your health, enhance your wellbeing and maximize your quality of life. You owe it to yourself to take time each day to commit to activity. See 5 ways to inject more activity into a typical day for some ideas of how to weave activity into your day, rather than needing to put a specific block of time aside.

'I don't enjoy it.' If you dread exercise, it's because you have picked the wrong type – or perhaps, you have tried to achieve too much too soon and overstretched yourself. The absolute key to lifelong exercise is to find an activity that you enjoy. Didn't like swimming? Try cycling. Found the gym boring? Try a group class. Hated running? Sign up for dance lessons! Once you've found an activity you like, make haste slowly. That means progressing at a slow and sensible rate rather than pushing yourself too hard. That way, you'll reap the gain, without the pain.