

Exercise and another E word ... excuses

In our extract, *Weight Watchers* fitness editor Martha Lourey-Bird busts 10 common 'I don't wanna' excuses from her new book

1 I can't exercise Yes you can. It's easier than you think. Basically, if you can walk and your arms are OK, you can exercise. It's as simple as that!

2 I suffer from joint pain That's very common, but not a good enough excuse to get you off the hook. People with joint pain or old injuries can do non-weight-bearing activities (swimming, walking laps in a pool, aqua classes or cycling on an exercise bike) or something gentle like walking, stretching or tai chi. Quite often it's a matter of "use it or lose it".

3 I can't afford a gym You don't need to join a gym. You can get fit in your own home. Our ancestors kept fit by doing activities everyday, not by attending 'exertion parlours'.

4 I'm not 'coordinated' Coordination is only essential for activities such as ball sports, some kinds of dancing and boxing. Hand-eye coordination improves quickly with practise, but if you feel this is a concern, opt for easy activities such as walking – minimal coordination is required!

5 I'm not a morning person That's fine – you can exercise at lunchtime, in the afternoon or in the evenings instead. It doesn't matter when you do it, just do it!

6 I'm overweight Not a problem – exercise will help you trim down. I recommend starting with a low- or

moderate-intensity activity, depending on how much weight you have to lose. Simply walking more than you do now will help. Avoid vigorous activities initially as they're not essential for fat-burning and can increase your risk of injury.


7 But it's raining Well, wear a raincoat or take an umbrella! Light rain is not really an excuse – although I do recommend staying indoors if the rain is moderate or the weather stormy. Consider buying an exercise DVD as a backup for times when you can't go outside.

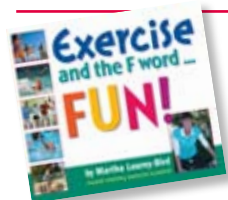
8 I have young children So do I, and although you don't have the freedom to exercise whenever you want, you can still fit it in. I'm currently upping my exercise quota by pushing the baby's pram and being active in the park with my son. Invest in a home exercise DVD or try my home circuit which you can do during the children's sleep or school times.

9 I don't know how to get started That's easy, just walk right out the front door! It can be as simple as walking up the road for five minutes, then turning around and walking back. Voila! Gradually increase the duration and before long you'll be getting the recommended 30-minute dosage.

... But it's raining outside



10 I just don't want to At last! We're getting to the truth. This tends to be the sentiment that hides behind most of the excuses I hear... it's often fuelled by bad experiences and misconceptions of exercise – especially the idea that exercise is going to hurt, and has to be hard work to get results. Nothing could be further from the truth. But if you find yourself using the I-don't-want-to excuse, the only thing I ask is that you have a try. And don't just try it once or twice. In fairness to yourself, you should really aim to commit to any exercise regimen for a minimum of three weeks. (Each week will be easier than the first.) It can take you three weeks to get through the 'discomfort' stage and become hooked – for life! 



Check out *Exercise and the F Word... FUN!*, a new book by *Weight Watchers* magazine fitness editor Martha Lourey-Bird. It's packed with innovative ideas for fitting more exercise and activity in your day. Available at good book stores, RRP \$29.95 (Insight).