

A Leading PT Shares How to Stay Fit During Lockdown

By Emily Gray

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



We all know how good exercise is for us but during lockdown things just seem different don't they? Our usual fitness routines have been disrupted, we can't get outside as much as we are used to and the lure of days hibernating on the sofa is just so strong.

Thing is, however tempting it is to throw in the towel, now really is the time we should be exercising, not just for our physical health but for our mental health too. Listique caught up with leading personal trainer [Michael Garry](#) (creator of the award-winning Body Change Programme, physical health and fitness expert for Liz Earle Wellbeing Magazine and previously fitness consultant at The Telegraph) to find out just how and why we should all be staying fit and active during the next stage of lockdown.



Up Your Exercise, But Not Too Much...

We all know the rules, we should only leave the house for essential shopping and our daily exercise, but even then it's been suggested by cabinet minister Michael Gove that we limited our time outside to an hour's walk or half an hour if we're jogging or cycling. Which means we have an awful lot of time when we're not necessarily moving. Time to turn that around, 'We are stuck inside for potentially 23 hours a day so the first thing is to do a little bit more than the government's recommended exercise by backing up your daily run or cycle with an at home work out,' says Michael. 'Now is a great time to start on your exercise journey or to set yourself a challenge or goal.'

That said we shouldn't be exercising non-stop. 'This isn't the time to be training for a marathon, too much high intensity exercise can suppress your immune or lead to burn out when instead we want to be the healthiest we can to give us a better chance of fighting the virus so build up exercise slowly, and keep it to about 50-60% of your exertion level,' recommends Michael. Rest days are important too, alternating workout days with recovery days allows your body to get stronger so that you can come back to the next workout and add on another 10% effort.



No Gym? No Problem.

So you didn't get your home gym installed in time for lockdown. Don't let your lack of equipment stop you from working out. 'There's plenty of basic equipment already in your own house. A really effective and simple exercise is to walk up the stairs ten times taking two steps at a time, or if you have a corridor then you can lunge down it, (if you don't have a corridor you can of course still static lunge). Chairs can be used for step ups, tricep dips and squats and most core exercises require nothing at all. Planks, side planks, push ups, crunches and reverse curls are all fantastic for your core and don't need much space at all.' And whilst delivery times might be slightly longer you can still order equipment online, Michael recommends getting a set of dumbbells or weights to build strength and also a skipping rope.



And Stretch....

Feeling a little more stiff these days? That's not surprising given that we are all moving a lot less and sitting a lot more. 'This is a brilliant time to focus on flexibility and stretching, working on your quads, hamstrings and glutes,' says Michael, 'start each work out with a 5-10 minute warm up so you don't pull a muscle, then stretch before and after you work out.' If you don't already incorporate yoga into your routine now is the time to start, there are plenty of free yoga classes online for beginners or many studios are now taking their classes online via the likes of Zoom so take a deep breath in and stretch it out.



Think About Your Diet

Hands up if your exercise consists mainly of walking to and from the fridge? You're not alone. The temptation to snack is undeniable, you're bored, the food is there and why not #treatyourself these days? We hear you. To counteract the snacking Michael suggests reducing calories elsewhere, 'try swapping to two meals a day, a brunch and evening meal filled with plenty of fruit and vegetables to reduce your calorie intake so that you can still snack later.'

In fact now is a great time to overhaul our diets completely, fast food is harder to come by (you're going to have to have self control on the [delivery apps](#)) and for once we have time to plan, prep and sit down to eat healthy, home cooked meals. The same applies to drinking, it might be easy in these stressful times to reach for a drink or two every night but excessive drinking can lead to a weakened immune system not to mention a general feeling of lethargy which is something you want to avoid anyway but more so when our daily routines have gone out the window.



It's Not Just For Your Physical Health

'I would say exercise is the most important thing at the moment,' says Michael. 'Not only will we be more physically fit, but it's going to help our mental health too. After working out you're going to have much more energy to tackle those tasks that need doing or projects that you want to get started like decorating your house.'

It's also going to help put you in the best frame of mind for tackling feelings of uncertainty and concern. And it's a chance to forget everything coronavirus related for half an hour or so and focus on completing each rep. Don't underestimate the power of those endorphins!

So, what are you waiting for? Time to get those trainers on...

If you are looking for a kick start then Michael Garry has taken his [consultations online](#) and can provide home fitness and dietary advice covering all the major principles of training. Check him out at [michaelgarrylondon](#).