# Spring Into Fitness

April 7, 2015 By Aundaray Guess

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At the beginning of the New Year we all make a resolution to start working out and/or eat healthier. But let's face it- who likes to work out during the cold winter months? Before you know it our resolution becomes an impossible task. That's the great thing about Spring- we all get a start over and an ability to design a realistic health program. A fitness program is great for anyone and all body types but especially for those with HIV. I make this testimony as I feel my health routine over the last ten years has contributed to my continued well-being despite my status.

There's been studies which shows that there's a relationship between a healthy lifestyle and an increase in one t-cell numbers. Also working out has benefited my overall well-being, and for many who participate in a health program, it has helped keep depression and anxiety in control.

And not to mention the added benefits one with HIV can receive such as:

The prevention of muscle loss and strength often seen in those with HIV

Lower levels of blood fats and sugars which can raised by HIV medications

Higher levels of HDL cholesterol (the good stuff) and lower levels of LDL cholesterol- the bad kind which has been connected to faster HIV progression.

So as we spring forward I offer my seven ways to have a healthy season.

1. **Do it for you**- The worst mistake one can make in starting a fitness regime is to do it for the benefit of someone else. We all want to look attractive to others but when you step into the gym or start exercising, how someone sees you that shouldn't be your marker of being fit. The person we should make happy when looking in the mirror is ourselves. Keeping that in mind you'll find yourself more motivated and determined to get the results you want.

**Start at your own pace**- Whether it's jogging or lifting weights, don't compare yourself to others. If you see someone jogging without breaking a sweat or lifting a huge amount of weight-just know they were once like you, starting from the beginning. The worst thing you could do is to try to keep up with someone who has been doing a routine for months. You not only risk hurting yourself but you also may get frustrated and give up.

**Check with your doctor before beginning**- This may seem like an obsolete suggestion but for those who are HIV it may have an added benefit. One reason is that there may be a medical reason you don't feel motivated to work out. You may find yourself always without energy and don't know why. It has been shown that those with HIV may experience low levels of testosterone based on many factors. For many that's the fuel to provide the boost you need to even do the simple day to day activities. Because we often don't know our levels are low it's best to check In with your doctor and they may start you on a testosterone treatment program.

**Control the vices**- In our busy lives we sometimes wish we had to time to have a proper meal, but the reality for some is that fast food is usually the only option. Yet making fast food your go to is not good for you or your body. In addition other vices like smoking and drinking can make a health regimen redundant. Look at ways to reduce eating junk food by always having healthy options around. Also seek support from others if you're trying to stop smoking or excessively drink. Remember your body is your temple so if you want it to be nice to you- you have to be nice to it.

**Keep a diary**- We sometimes don't give ourselves enough credit for our successes, even the small ones. A diary is an excellent roadmap of where one used to be and where they're at now. There are so many online options which make it easy to collect your results and place them in a place where you can review them. Also many are now creating a picture diary which allows them to visually see the results their making.

6. **Stay off the scale**- If you want to really get frustrated and derail your efforts, step on a scale. A scale doesn't accurately inform you of the progress you're making. People who work out can't understand why it looks like they're gaining weight. The truth of the matter is you're not. As you lose fat mass you're gaining muscle mass which is good. So when you step on the scale it's reflecting the muscle which you're developing. Understanding this you'll see that a daily scale check is often misleading and not an accurate barometer of your real results

7. **Find what works for you**- For some going to the local gym is a preferred way to stay in shape. For others it may be jogging through the local park. Other non-traditional programs such as yoga are considered a good way to workout. No matter what you do, do something and you'll not only feel good but feel good about yourself. And most importantly you can start today as it takes one step at a time to be the best health you want to be.

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o as the warms sunny days of summer slowly approach, start making today your day to spring forward into a healthy life!

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