

## THE NEW SCHOOL OF FITNESS

Make sure dated notions aren't taking the inspiration out of your perspiration.

My first day at Work Out World, I was geared up and ready, water bottle in hand, feeling incredibly focused and driven as I strutted past the rows of machines. But it wasn't long before my brief affair with the gym fizzled. Months later, I realized I never missed going. Not once.

The trick to maintaining some kind—any kind—of fitness routine is not a matter of pure discipline. You have to want to do it. As an editor at *Body+Soul* magazine, one of my biggest challenges has been to inspire readers to reconnect with fitness in a meaningful way.

Because let's face it:

Unless you're  
currently  
training  
for a

marathon, the idea of committing to a regular exercise regimen can be daunting—or at least very, very dull.

Enter the mind-body fitness trend, a holistic approach to wellness that's taken off in a big way. By combining movement with mindfulness, functionality and stress-reduction techniques, it teaches us there's more to staying healthy than just walking, running or stepping in place while watching the news. "The fitness landscape is changing," says Pilates expert Ellen Barrett, creator of the *Yogini Workout* DVD. "It's not just about toning your tush anymore. It's about preventive health. It's about feeling like your best self."

In order to do that, you need to take a good look at what old hang-ups have you hamstrung. We've taken a few of the most common ones and recast them with an eye toward rekindling your fitness flame.



**OLD SCHOOL:  
EXERCISE IS BORING**

**NEW RULE: ENGAGE  
THE MIND, BODY  
AND SPIRIT**

For many of us, going to the gym is a glorified version of bringing your car to the shop—you do a series of mechanical activities while your brain idles in neutral, waiting for the whole thing to be over. But you don't have to be a slave to your routine. "Working out should not become your life," says Barrett. "Grabbing exercise here and there is great." That means that other activities, such as taking a long walk, gardening or cleaning house, *count*.

Another way to make fitness more engaging is to involve the mind and spirit. Holistic fitness expert Danny Dreyer, creator of the ChiWalking technique, found that by applying the principles of tai chi and meditation to walking, the benefits could be enhanced exponentially. "When you can observe your body, without judgment, you're learning to focus the mind," he says. Paying attention to what you're doing, he adds, narrows your focus, leaving you less susceptible to stressful thoughts and emotions. It can also open the door for more expansive, receptive and creative thinking. And there's nothing boring about that.



**OLD SCHOOL:  
NO PAIN, NO GAIN**

**NEW RULE:  
RETIRE THE WHIP**

A masochistic approach to getting in shape is not only dated, it's dangerous. It implies that fitness has to hurt—and leads many to push themselves to the point of injury, says health practitioner and Taoist minister Tammy Wise, founder of BodyLogos, a fitness practice that marries western exercise with the spirituality of eastern meditation techniques. In order to guide your body toward health, stop

seeing it as the enemy, says Wise, and start seeing it as a partner. "Rather than just focusing on working on your physique," she says, "use exercise as a way to establish a better relationship with your body." And it starts with listening to what your body has to say. By tuning into the sensations you feel as you lift weights or run, she says, you'll be aware of when you've hit your limit. In fact, some days your body may tell you that what it needs most is to rest—and honoring that need is far more important than seeing how far you can go.



**OLD SCHOOL: THE  
GOAL IS TO BE BUFF**

**NEW RULE: MAKE  
HEALTH YOUR  
MOTIVATION**

The image of a lean, muscular athlete may seem the picture of health, but it has little to do with real-life results. Dreyer points out that something as basic and effective as walking requires little in the way of brute strength. To walk efficiently and prevent injury to your joints and back, he explains, you need to be flexible and relaxed. "Only then can you breathe deeply, get the circulation going and maintain proper alignment," he says. By comparison, a tight, tense body can inhibit healthy movement, which may cause problems down the line.

"The point of fitness is to achieve vibrantly good health," says Barrett. "Sure, you'll look slimmer, but that's not the carrot anymore. It's about being able to do the things you want to do more easily—like carrying your own luggage and getting up a flight of stairs without losing your breath." Beyond that, she says, your skin glows. You feel younger. Not to mention the effects on mood and energy level. When you set your sights on improving the way you feel and function, fitness ceases to be a pointless chore or an uphill battle. It becomes an evolving tool for helping you live your best life. **TERRI TRESPICIO**

## GEAR UP

The right equipment can elevate your routine.



### The beat goes on

Pace yourself with the NuMetrex Heart Rate Monitor Sports Bra. Special sensors knit into the bra's seamless fabric send heart-rate data to a small transmitter (removable for washing) that relays information to a wristwatch, allowing you to adjust the intensity of your exercise accordingly. \$49.95; numetrex.com



### Core values

Never chase your roly-poly exercise ball again. Sit, lie and lean on the BOSU Ballast Ball to perform your favorite core-strengthening exercises, then stand up and—voilà!—the ball stays in place thanks to the sand-like material inside. \$59.95; bosu.com



### Watercooler cool

Beauty meets function with refreshing results in the Ovipur water filter unit by Aquaovo. The egg-shaped unit employs gravity and the thermal properties of porcelain to provide water fit for maximum hydration—and an eye-catching design fit for your home exercise space. A new 12-volt thermoelectric cooling system can be inserted into the base for eco-friendly chilling. \$557; aquaovo.com. **ANN CAMPBELL**