

GYM ANXIETY

Why We Get “Gym-timidated”

A lot of people experience some level of social anxiety in their lives. We get nervous talking in front of a group, attending parties, and even exercising in public. Whether you are outgoing or shy, your anxiety should not stop you from being healthy!

Many women report that what they fear the most at the gym are glances from their fellow male *and* female gym-goers, looking clueless around weights and other gym equipment, and looking “out of shape”. However, by giving into this “gymtimidation”, you are less likely to reach your fitness goals.



Oh, The Irony!

*The best way to reduce your anxiety is actually to **exercise!** Physical activity improves both physical and mental health. A chemical in the brain, known as “endorphins”, are released during and after a workout. These have proven to be correlated with a positive mood and an enhanced sense of well-being. Exercising has shown to relieve the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder, and anxiety and depressive disorders. The greatest way to diminish your fear after entering the gym is to just get going!*



You're just
one exercise
away from
a good mood!

8 Ways To Reduce Your Gym Anxiety

1. Avoid Peak Hours

Try before 7 a.m. or after 8 p.m. The less people around, the less stressed you will feel and the more you will be able to get in to focus.

2. Join A Group Fitness Class

The beauty of it: You don't have to know what you're doing! Everyone will be focused on their own workout or the instructor. Plus classes are a great way to try and learn new activities.

3. Bring Music

Upbeat music that you enjoy can give you extra motivation, as well as block out all other distractions; helping you get "in your zone".

4. Plan Your Workout Ahead Of Time

Walking around aimlessly will stress you out more, and you may be willing to call it quits too early. Having a game plan will give you more confidence and a complete and successful workout.

5. Meet With A Trainer

Many gyms offer a free or discounted session with a trainer or employee. Use this to your advantage to learn how to use the machines and which ones would be best for your fitness needs.

6. Bring A Friend

Your friend might know more exercises that they can show you and help ease your gym anxiety. At the very least, it will give you motivation to not break your workout date with them.

7. Dress For Success

It is always important to have proper shoes and clothing while you exercise, but there is no right or wrong style. Wear something comfortable, that you're okay with getting sweaty, and that won't make you feel like "everyone is looking at you".

8. Be Confident

This is most important! Most people are more concerned about how they look (just like you might be) than how others look, and probably aren't wasting any time judging you. Even pretending to be confident will give you more confidence and provide a stress-free workout.

Resources:

Coyle, E. (2014, April 30). Gym Anxiety? 7 Tips That Will Help You Overcome Your Fitness Fears. *Wall St. Cheat Sheet*. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from <http://wallstcheatsheet.com/life/gym-anxiety-7-tips-that-will-help-you-overcome-your-fitness-fears.html/?a=viewall>

Crain, E. (2014, January 6). Have You Ever Experienced "Gymtimidation"?. *womenshealthmag.com*. Retrieved June 30, 2014, from <http://www.womenshealthmag.com/fitness/gymtimidation>

Levinson, C. A. Development and Validation of the Social Exercise and Anxiety Measure (SEAM): Assessing Fears, Avoidance, and Importance of Social Exercise. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 244-253.