

ITEM #13

I LIKE THE WAY YOU MOVE

Customize the Way You Exercise

*So ask your doctor if getting
off your ass is right for you!*

— Bill Maher

MOVING AROUND IS IMPORTANT. I believe *how* you move around is less important. Physical activity can be vigorous sweeping, yoga classes, a daily walk or visit to the gym, training for a triathlon, or my personal favorite, dancing around the house to Madonna, Duran Duran, or Elton John's "Crocodile Rock." I wish I didn't, but I detest the gym and rarely stick with any exercise routine for more than six months to a year. But I'm extremely active and my job is pretty labor-intensive. I move quickly, walk fast, and take the stairs as often as possible. I once gave up my car and biked everywhere for six months straight, but that was because I was too cheap to help my daughter buy a car, so I gave her mine. (The one time I tried to buy her some wheels, I answered an ad for a used car and my daughter and I met some creepy guy in a deserted parking lot. We were

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pretty convinced the guy had recently stolen the car. She thought so because he was wearing a black leather jacket, had greasy hair, and was smoking a cigarette. I thought so because someone's laptop and a pair of high heels were lying in the backseat. The owner was probably in the trunk. We literally sprinted back to our car before he had a chance to kill us and sell our organs on eBay.) Find some way to be active: garden, take a Pilates class, chase your children or grandchildren around the park, go swimming or jogging, work out with weights, take a ballet or tap class, or go to Jazzercise — but get a move on!

Maybe you think Jazzercise is corny, but it is a killer workout! Plus, corny is the new cool! The three times in my life that I've been in seriously amazing shape were when I was taking Jazzercise classes three or four days a week. An hour-long class goes by quickly because you're dancing to poppy tunes and working out with weights, bands, and exercise balls. It's not at all an intimidating atmosphere, and the folks who run it are always ridiculously friendly and welcoming. The guy who operates the center near my house is some kind of Jazzercise celebrity and travels all over the world for the company. I took a class while traveling in Canada, and the students literally screamed like rock star groupies when I told them who my hometown Jazzercise instructor was. They kept asking me to demonstrate how my guru did certain routines and *ooohed* and *ahhed* when I showed them. I must say, I kind of liked the attention.

Whatever you choose, regular physical exercise is hugely beneficial to your overall health and significantly contributes to weight loss and maintenance. Activities that involve light

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weights or stretching are especially helpful. Weight-bearing exercises are essential for optimum bone health and can help prevent bone loss or osteoporosis.

Making exercise part of a regular routine is tough for many people. A doctor and dear friend of mine who works full-time in her busy dermatology practice and has five kids decided one day that even though she had a million legitimate excuses to not find the time to exercise, making excuses was no longer going to be an option. She had no desire to waste precious time and energy driving to and from a gym, so she bought some light weights, a twenty-minute Pilates DVD, and a rowing machine. She committed to getting up an hour earlier each day. My friend loves to read, so to help pass the time, she listens to audiobooks on her iPod during her workout. She says this has become a real motivator because she wakes up looking forward to hearing more of her book. She also says it's not the fat-burning or health aspect of her workout that keeps her from hitting the snooze button. She just gets up, mindlessly throws on some workout wear, and hits Play on her iPod.

As you lose the fat, you will notice that you have more spring in your step; you'll feel bouncier and lighter because you *are* lighter. Before long, taking the stairs and walking from here to there won't tire you as quickly. By substituting twenty minutes a day of walking for driving, the average person could lose as much as seven pounds in a year without changing any other habits. I have to shop a great deal for work. I purposefully park my car as far away from my target destination (which, coincidentally, is often Target) as possible, ensuring that I'll have an

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opportunity to get my heart rate up a bit. If I'm schlepping bags on the way back to my car, I get even more of a boost.

Being good to your body and moving more can also help you make less impact on the planet. Weather permitting, biking or walking to work or the neighbor's house or the grocery store burns calories without requiring your car to burn through more fuel. If you can, take mass transit. I live six blocks from Portland's light rail system, called MAX. That's twelve blocks round-trip of walking for me, and I'm not blowing through any nonrenewable energy sources. I save a little money, and at the same time, my legs get shapelier and leaner (too bad no one will ever see them — they are so white I'd probably cause mass blindness if I wore a pair of shorts). Do what you can to move more. Every day. It all adds up to better health, increased longevity, weight loss and maintenance, and getting into that dream pair of jeans!

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1. Move more every day.
2. Take the stairs whenever possible.
3. Discover the joy of daily stretching and using light weights to maintain healthy bones.
4. Find activities that you enjoy, and mix it up.
5. Park your car far away from your destinations.
6. Walk to nearby stores, restaurants, or neighbors' houses.