

Getting In Shape For Summer: It's Not Too Late!

By Erin Mantz

Meredith Reinsdorf of Alexandria doesn't have to look far for motivation to exercise. Simply envisioning summer days drives her weekly workouts. "Knowing I will spend a lot of time wearing a bathing suit this summer gives me motivation to get to the gym *now!*" she says. She heads there five times a week, focusing on cardio three to four days and weight lifting for two. "When I stick to this plan and watch my diet, I do see results," Reinsdorf declares. The secret to her success may be attributed to setting reasonable goals so she can stick to a reasonable – not out-of-reach – routine. She combines workouts with a commitment to skip dessert for two weeks or cut down on carbs for a defined period, and she sees results fast.

Getting to the gym isn't for everyone. But, the good news is if you want to get in shape for summer (and who doesn't?), you will find dozens of ways to do this in the D.C. area, from personal training sessions or a thirty-day home workout to playing yourself into shape in soccer clinics or women's sports leagues.

The Motivation Factor

Continually finding excuses to skip exercising takes almost as much time as exercising itself. You don't have enough time; you just ate a box of Girl Scout cookies anyway; you're too tired; it's too boring; you don't know where to begin. If these reasons sound familiar, spring can be the time to push them aside to get the summer shape you desire and deserve.

The question may be what motivates us to really start and then stick to a plan? Chris Parker with MedStar Health serves as the personal trainer to the Washington Freedom, the country's premier women's soccer team. Freedom players find motivation to stay in shape; after all, their games and teammates depend on their strong athletic performance and agility on the field. Through weekly workouts, Parker sees the Freedom women progress through extraordinary self-discipline and strict fitness routines. "As elite athletes, they are already highly motivated," he says. "Their bodies are like fine-tuned machines." But, he knows that not every woman has a competitive soccer season to motivate them! As a personal trainer over the past thirteen years, he sees that sheer motivation is the biggest challenge to sticking and succeeding with exercise. "It's easy to participate in an exercise program, but it's hard to push yourself. Take a step and actually change your lifestyle," he recommends. For example, come home from work and walk with a friend instead of watching television from the couch. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. When it comes to getting in shape for this summer, Parker insists "it's not too late!" He shares a 30 Day Workout below. All you need to do is find *your* motivation.

What drives Washington Freedom player Lori Lindsey to work out is her desire to be the best soccer player she can be when the Freedom's 2007 home season kicks off on June 9 at the Maryland SoccerPlex in Germantown, she will face the fans in tip-top shape, thanks to regular workouts with Parker and a conscious choice to combine healthy eating with exercise. She is also a personal trainer and echoes Parker's recommendation of creating a good, healthy lifestyle. "Make a few changes in your diet, be consistent and mix it with exercise. "Anytime is a great time to start." she attests. Here, she demonstrates 30-Day Workout exercises and says "use the right form when lifting to avoid injuries. Remember that getting in shape is a process and you'll see results."

Chris Parker's 30-Day Workout

Overall goal: Do a six-day-a-week work out -- three days a week of cardio alternating with three days of weight training.

The cardio consists of thirty to forty-five minutes of fast-pace walking or slow-pace jogging, followed by an abdominal workout. Get your heart rate up above your target heart rate for that thirty to forty-five minutes.

The weightlifting involves three sets of ten repetitions for the first and second weeks, progressing to three sets of fifteen repetitions in the third and fourth weeks. The weight lifting days will alternate between upper body, lower body, and then one day of total body. Those days will start with a five-minute jump rope warm up followed by ten minutes of stretching (hamstrings, quadriceps, calves, piriformis, and chest). Hold the stretches for thirty seconds and repeat three times on each leg or arm.

Lower body exercises include:

Squats, to workout your three major leg muscles, the quadriceps (front of leg), hamstrings (back of leg), and your gluts
Lunges, which also workout all three major muscles; hamstring curls, which work on strengthening the hamstrings; one legged calve raises, which strengthens the gastrocs and some of the soleus, the two muscles that makes up your calf muscle; and sidelining hip abduction, which strengthens your abductor muscle (located on the outside of your thigh and hip)

Upper body exercises include:

Dumbbell chest press and chest fly on ball, which strengthens your chest muscles
One armed and both armed dumbbell rows, which strengthen your back muscles

Lateral raises and dumbbell shrugs, which strengthen the shoulders
 Supine tricep extension with dumbbells, which strengthen the triceps (back of arm)
 Bicep and hammer curls, which strengthen the biceps (front of arm)
 Pushups, which strengthen the chest and biceps
 Sideline shoulder external rotation, which strengthens the external rotators of the shoulder

Workout Schedule

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
5 min. jump rope	30-45 minute cardio	5 min. jump rope	30-45 minute cardio	5 min. jump rope	30-45 minute cardio	Rest
10 minutes of stretching	crunches 3x15 reps	10 minutes of stretching	crunches 3x15 reps	10 minutes of stretching	crunches 3x15 reps	
dumbbell chest press	plank 3x30 sec hold	squats	plank 3x30 sec hold	pushups	plank 3x30 sec hold	
dumbbell chest fly	bicycle 3x15 reps	lunges, stationary	bicycle 3x15 reps	walking lunges	bicycle 3x15 reps	
one armed dumbbell row		hamstring curls on ball		hammer bicep curls with squats		
sideline shoulder external rotation		one legged calve raises		wall squats		
dumbbell bicep curl		sideline hip abduction		lateral dumbbell raises dumbbell shrugs		
supine tricep extension						

Find What Works For You

Some people dread going to the gym, so they never get there. Others find the logistics of getting there impossible, getting stuck at the office, finding childcare, feeling lost in the crowd. Still others are actually energized by the environment, with its pulsating music, extensive equipment and classes. What’s important is finding something you like, so you will stick to it instead of shaking your head at the thought of it. Just ask Rori Malech, Potomac mom of two who works full-time yet always fits running into days overflowing with clients, homework, home renovations and play date plans. “Love what you do,” she attests. “Just as you have to love your job to get up in the morning, you have to enjoy your exercise routine. I know I should spend more time strength training, but I love to run. That is what gets me up before dawn and out of my warm bed while the rest of the house is still asleep!”

Play Yourself Into Shape: Make Fitness Fun (Really!)

Jane Beech of Silver Spring always loved team sports but hated going to the gym. She spent years kicking the soccer ball around with her kids. But this winter, she took her game – and fitness - to a whole new level by attending a six-week Washington Freedom Adult Women’s Beginners Soccer Clinic. On six Saturday mornings, she showed up to get in shape and hone soccer skills. Washington Freedom coaches and players led ladies with a combination of guidance and gusto. “It’s been a lot of fun and everything I’d hoped it would be,” Beech says. That experience motivated her to keep going; she’s looking to join a local women’s soccer league. Her work as a certified in-line skating instructor through SkateU keeps her busy, too!

When Julie McCune of Northwest DC participated in the winter Freedom clinic, she liked knowing the time was set aside. “Playing offers you a built-in workout each week,” she says. As Chairwoman of the Washington Area Women’s Soccer League, she helps others find these opportunities, too. She suggests women visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.wawsl.org"](http://www.wawsl.org) www.wawsl.org to find players or teams to fit their lifestyle and level.

Freedom player Lori Lindsay helped lead the clinics and doesn’t seem surprised by the tremendous turnout and positive player reactions. “Exercise plans can fail because they’re boring. Clinics and indoor teams are fun for people of all ages and levels. And sprinting around there burns lots of calories!” she says. The Freedom will continue to add adult soccer clinics and practice sessions throughout the spring and summer. Find details or sign up at [HYPERLINK](#)

"<http://www.washingtonfreedom.com>" www.washingtonfreedom.com.

Everyone's motivations and choices around exercise may differ, but one thing is certain: Summer is coming soon. As ACE Personal Trainer and Fit in D.C. Owner Vionna Jones says, "Schedule your fitness time into your planner or PDA like you would any other meeting. And don't cancel."

Can Music Make or Break Your Workout?

It may depend on the kind of exercise you're doing. A 2005 study by Fairleigh Dickinson University says people who listen to music while they exercise are more likely to stick to their workout plan. Tracking 41 overweight or obese women, researchers found that women who used portable CD players on their walking workouts lost more weight and body fat than those who didn't use the devices over a six-month period.

A study at England's Nottingham Trent University found that bike riders who listened to upbeat music while cycling were able to pedal longer than those who listened to slow music, slow-to-fast music, or no music at all.

If you're an experienced runner, you might want to stick to slow-paced music or none at all. One University of North Carolina study found trained runners were actually worse off after listening to fast-paced music. But if you're an untrained runner, rock on. Fast music may actually increase your endurance. Evidently, fast-paced music may disrupt a trained runner's rhythm.

See the Washington Freedom in action this summer!

Their 2007 home season starts June 9th. Check the schedule or purchase tickets at [HYPERLINK "http://www.washingtonfreedom.com" www.washingtonfreedom.com](http://www.washingtonfreedom.com).