

SPEAKER, CONSULTANT, COACH, AUTHOR

**Michelle Cederberg, CSP**

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The Energy to Succeed  
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## Embrace a NEW ATTITUDE about your health, starting NOW!

The Small-Steps Approach to *Finally Fitting In Fitness*

By Michelle Cederberg, MKin, BA Psyc, Certified Exercise Physiologist, Co-Active Coach

Physical activity is one of those things that everyone *thinks* about doing, but few people actually do with any regularity, and if your busy life transpires against your efforts to get fit, you're not alone. As a nation, we're having trouble *'fitting in fitness'*.

Recent statistics estimate that 63% of Canadians are sedentary, or not exercising at an adequate level to maintain good health. If you're among them, you likely know what's stopping you. A Health Canada survey reports that individuals between the ages of 18 and 59 list lack of time, lack of energy, and lack of motivation as their top three reasons for not exercising.

**No surprise there!** Lack of time is the biggest culprit, as our busy schedules transpire against us, and exercise gets put off yet again. *Why? Lack of time* eats up our motivation and energy. In the daily rush from one commitment to the next, *energy* drains. As energy approaches nil, the last thing a busy person feels like doing is *getting motivated* to find **time** to do physical activity. Since the daily "to do" list is endless, it guarantees that lack of time will always be an issue...and thus the circle remains unbroken.

*"So, when do I take care of myself?"*

Not only will regular exercise make you look better, it will also make you feel better and perform better as well. But you knew that didn't you? Yet each day you're plagued with lack of time, energy and motivation—all of which you need for making the desired changes and, when you skip another workout, you beat yourself up *emotionally* with the 'failure' of it.

*"I'm such a loser! Why can't I figure this out?"*

The resulting decrease in self-esteem further diminishes any desire to make an effort at exercise. *"I can't get it right anyway..."* Suddenly, *years* have gone by with nothing but

***"How we spend our days is of course how we spend our lives."***

~ Anne Dillard

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resentment toward yourself and the exercise that eludes you. If you identify with this cycle, there is hope, and it starts with changing your approach to *finally fitting in fitness*.

### *The 'All or Nothing' Problem*

So many new and unmotivated exercisers wait for the ideal conditions or inspiration to do it all and do it right, and in process, end up doing nothing. You may have the ambition to reach the next level yet set yourself up for failure by creating unrealistic expectations of yourself and your available time.

If you want to exercise but seem to waste time, procrastinate, put off, delay, wait for better circumstances, more time, more energy, more courage, or more knowledge, you may be suffering from 'The All or Nothing Exercise Problem'. *I'll get to it when...I'll get to it when...I'll get to it when...* **What would happen if you just got started?**

How truthful have you been about your efforts to realistically *fit in fitness*? Without proper planning and preparation, you're sure to come up against these realities time and again.

**TRUTH #1:** *The fitness and health ideal we have in our head often doesn't match our plan, or the available time in our week. Our lives change and our plan for exercise doesn't.*

You tell yourself "*I'm pumped to lose 20 pounds in 2 months*" but your schedule will only *realistically* allow you to exercise twice a week right now. You say "*Well, I'll get up at 5:30am and workout before work.*" But you know darn well you're not a morning person so it's not likely to become a regular thing. You lament that you used to be *so fit* without acknowledging that your career has grown and your available time for hanging out at the gym has decreased. You *swear* you'll do whatever it takes to get back to 'pre-baby' weight, but with two toddlers at home, your time and energy have vanished.

As our lives change, we need to adjust with the times – not *forever*, just **for now**. Isn't it better that you exercise at least twice a week *today* rather than waiting to exercise your ideal three to four times *later*? Isn't 10 minutes of *doing* better than the hour you were *thinking* of doing? If thinking burned calories we wouldn't need exercise, but since it doesn't, we have to *get moving* in order to make a difference!

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**TRUTH #2: Success in fitness requires some effort from you.** The first step to a higher level of personal fitness and health is creating the **habit**. Whether you're just starting out or working to a new level, set your goals and make a realistic plan for how you will get there based on the available time in your schedule TODAY.

This is a tough one since we're driven by *results*, and it's true, they're slower to materialize if we're not exercising as much. Even still, we have to habituate exercise before we can build on it. If your busy schedule allows for less exercise than you're used to, then start with less ... **just start**.

If you start small, you'll be less overwhelmed by the changes, and as the exercise habit solidifies, you *will* find more time, energy, *and* motivation for the next level.

The *only* first step to realizing sustainable fitness and health goals is to make a commitment to *fit it fitness* – to create a **habit** around your plan, *no matter what*.

You must chart your course and follow it – *even in small steps* – and this will eventually bring you results. Whether you're exercising, running a business, maintaining a household, raising children, pursuing an education, time issues will prevail, and if you're one of those people who continues to wait for the *more of it* to materialize it may be *time* to change your plan of attack.

Remember, you don't need *hours* to change the outlook, you just need to **get started**. Create your success habits 10 minutes at a time if that's what it takes.

**"The secret to getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one."**

~ Mark Twain

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## The 'Start Small' Solution

*My weekly exercise chart*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Time of Day							
Length of Workout							
Workout Plan							

Consider the following questions and fill in the responses on your *weekly exercise chart* above.

### 1) Which days of the week are you able to work out?

*(Mark an 'x' on your weekly chart on the days you've selected)*

Choose **three** days, ideally with a rest day between. Add *time of day* and *length of time* that will work best for your exercise sessions. Choose times that are least likely to be effected by conflicts from work, your kids' schedule, or your own energy cycle. This may be the most challenging step, but it's worth it. Prioritize, and *give up something less important* if you have to.

**2) Write down your physical activity plan** (*walking at break, class after work, weights with a friend*). With this step it is important to enlist the help of a friend or a trainer to help you map out your 'best case' workout plan, especially if you have no idea what you'd like to do. Keep things simple at first – walking, 5 exercises from this booklet, an instructor lead class ... know precisely what you will do so there will be no questions or second guessing, just a clear plan with few *escape routes*.

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So now you've mapped out **when** and **what**, and you start thinking: "**WHAT IF** my exercise date arrives and I don't feel like going?" *Sound familiar?* This question will pop up again and again, and it's the reason so many Canadians aren't prioritizing their health, so here's the *tough love answer...*

### 3) When your exercise date comes up, **GET OFF YOUR BUTT ...NO MATTER WHAT!**

If you're tired, lack energy, or are unmotivated, *tough luck!* **GO ANYWAYS!** Remember our top three reasons for not exercising? Not enough time, not enough energy, and lack of motivation will always be there to sabotage your exercise efforts, and that won't change unless you do!

Begin to create the habit, even if you *do less* once you get moving. *Give yourself permission to do only 10 minutes, but make the effort to get to your exercise date.* This way you have a chance to fulfill the bigger *commitment* goal of actually making it into your workout clothing and at least to the start of your workout.

Exercise requires physical effort, but it also requires preparation and planning. You have to pack your fitness clothes, adjust your schedule, get to the gym (or wherever you're exercising), change your clothes, make sure you're properly fuelled, *then* do your workout. To improve your chances of success, you must first imprint the *habit* of exercise and then build on the **results** goals of intensity, volume, cross training, or nutrition.

If you become mindful of these 4 simple steps you will move closer to being regularly active than you ever imagined. Once you make it to your workout, 10 minutes often turns to 15 or 20, until eventually you're fulfilling your 'best case' workout and even adding on to it.

### 4) Repeat all steps next week...

Fitness is *indeed* a life-long commitment but it needn't be overwhelming. Plan for three honest exercise efforts each week, then knock them down one at a time. If your schedule allows it, include Monday as your first effort so you experience success (and cross off one exercise efforts) early in the week.

*Rather than "put it off" until tomorrow, make a decision to use TODAY as an opportunity to "add on" an effort at physical activity.*

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Finally, don't overwhelm yourself with the idea that you have to GO BIG to make an impact. No matter if you're starting from scratch or have been moderately active and want to add on a bit more effort, your weekly physical activity goal is still the same ...

**To consistently do *more than what is normal for YOU.***

If you're currently not exercising, then more *isn't much*. Habituate 10 minutes per day or 30 minutes 3 times per week. If you're already successful with 2 exercise sessions per week, try to add in a third, or make your current sessions a bit more intense. Add on small bits, get used to the changes they bring on, then add or change again as your body tells you it's ready. No matter what you decide, simply *get started*.

***"A good plan implemented  
today is better than a perfect  
plan implemented  
tomorrow."***

~ George Patton

**Michelle Cederberg, Certified Speaking Professional**

MKin, BA Psyc, Certified Exercise Physiologist , Co-Active Coach

Michelle wants her audiences to have the energy to succeed in business and in life; and with over 20 years experience in health education and business motivation she's developed innovative and practical methods to get you there. Speaking with humour and passion Michelle breaks down the mental and physical barriers that rob us of the energy we need and deserve. She inspires busy people to put their own health and well being back on their priority lists with a small steps approach that leaves them believing they can.

With a Masters in Kinesiology, a BA in Psychology, and a specialization in Health and Exercise Psychology, Michelle combines mind, body, and practicality to inspire change!

As a Certified Speaking Professional she shares her experiences in a humorous and realistic way with delighted audiences across North America. Through her presentations, products and personality she motivates you to take small steps toward big changes, so you can actually find energy, productivity and success - even with a busy schedule!

**To learn more visit:** [www.workLIFEenergy.com](http://www.workLIFEenergy.com)

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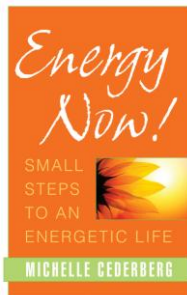
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### Michelle's Books



This article is an excerpt from Michelle's new book **Energy Now! Small Steps to an Energetic Life** which was released January 2012 across North America.

Buy it now on Amazon or ask for it at your favorite book store!



**GOT TO IT** accountability journal and **If Your Life Sucks It's Your Fault** mini-book

Available at Michelle's sessions or on-line at:

[www.worklifeenergy.com](http://www.worklifeenergy.com)

### One-on-one Co-Active Coaching with Michelle

**What do you want more of in your life?** Which parts of your life have you shut off and how is that impacting your health, happiness and success?

#### If you long for:

*Better health and wellness, a more fulfilling career, a happier relationship, more fun and laughter, meaningful friendships, greater success in work and life, more energy...more anything...*

**Co-Active Coaching** motivates you to harness your full potential and live a more inspired life. Sessions are by phone, 30 – 45 minutes each, 3 weeks of every month. Michelle guides you through each session by asking powerful questions that will challenge you to reach to new levels in your life and do more of the things you've always dreamed of.

**Get more info at:** [www.michellecederberg.com/coaching](http://www.michellecederberg.com/coaching)

**Small steps to GREAT GAINS:** that's the practical and thrilling philosophy that makes coaching with Michelle so full of possibilities!

She is a kind and caring **kick in the butt** when you're feeling stuck. She's genuine, compassionate and at times quite direct. *She wants what's best for you.*

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