*The Washington Post*includes an article: "Losing your motivation to exercise as the pandemic drags on? Here’s how to get it back.”

Here are some excerpts:

If your motivation to exercise during the pandemic is as elusive as flour and antibacterial wipes, that’s not surprising — and you’re not alone. “It’s totally fine and totally normal to have your motivation wane,” says Steve Magness, a Houston-based running coach who has seen athletes at all levels lose initiative as the pandemic wears on. Here’s why you may be feeling this way and what you can do about it.

**Why you might have lost motivation**

 “One of the best things to keep people motivated is staying in a routine. You take that away, you throw it for a loop, and it’s really hard to establish new routines,” says Magness, author of “[Peak Performance](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdmanalytics2.com%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fread.amazon.com%252Fkp%252Fembed%253Fasin%253DB01N1RNP9N%2526preview%253Dnewtab%2526linkCode%253Dkpe%2526ref_%253Dcm_sw_r_kb_dp_..zUEbZNTJME0%2526tag%253Dthewaspos09-20%26i%3D1%26d%3DlNWPjrRVTeKKPtH-brmPZA%26e%3Ddrhays%2540theperformingedge.com%26a%3DTdOPbn6ZRqCBkHhCSUULlA%26s%3DaMe4TNL5Jk4&data=02%7C01%7Ctshigeno%40adler.edu%7Ce120fd33848d4daab00f08d7f8dd5a58%7C9de910667ccb4483a226fd27d4b9c570%7C0%7C0%7C637251501888650237&sdata=Gz4iLz6c%2BnQm%2FBr2YiEKaq2iA2V%2FBrotpNr7hQankVI%3D&reserved=0).” “All of a sudden, our offices and our homes have become the same thing.”

**Reasons to stay active**

 While the pandemic may have drained some of your desire to work out, it’s also the reason you shouldn’t ditch your routine. “Nothing is more important right now than everyone’s health,” Harrison says.

[Julie Emmerman](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdmanalytics2.com%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Fjulieemmerman.com%252F%26i%3D2%26d%3DlNWPjrRVTeKKPtH-brmPZA%26e%3Ddrhays%2540theperformingedge.com%26a%3DTdOPbn6ZRqCBkHhCSUULlA%26s%3DjZrzPoA-Vk0&data=02%7C01%7Ctshigeno%40adler.edu%7Ce120fd33848d4daab00f08d7f8dd5a58%7C9de910667ccb4483a226fd27d4b9c570%7C0%7C0%7C637251501888660197&sdata=rfARLNn2Gbkkl0wsIDVV7DB0BKDzL%2FPApxcGU06tlWY%3D&reserved=0), a Boulder, Colo., sports psychologist, says we need to take responsibility for our own physical and emotional well-being, and “exercise is one of the best portals to do that.”

One of the many benefits of exercise is that it keeps our [immune system](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdmanalytics2.com%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.washingtonpost.com%252Flifestyle%252Fwellness%252Fimmune-boost-coronavirus%252F2020%252F03%252F05%252Fe111554a-5e73-11ea-b014-4fafa866bb81_story.html%253Ftid%253Dlk_inline_manual_15%2526itid%253Dlk_inline_manual_15%26i%3D3%26d%3DlNWPjrRVTeKKPtH-brmPZA%26e%3Ddrhays%2540theperformingedge.com%26a%3DTdOPbn6ZRqCBkHhCSUULlA%26s%3DFaX9i-krjGg&data=02%7C01%7Ctshigeno%40adler.edu%7Ce120fd33848d4daab00f08d7f8dd5a58%7C9de910667ccb4483a226fd27d4b9c570%7C0%7C0%7C637251501888660197&sdata=ciAuV94zqPM7AxnuSxKwUDjntybI6InGU7vTmfz2jYY%3D&reserved=0) functioning optimally. Emmerman says more is not necessarily better; working out too intensely or for too long may increase your [risk](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdmanalytics2.com%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.washingtonpost.com%252Flifestyle%252Fwellness%252Fexercise-immunity-coronavirus%252F2020%252F04%252F14%252Fa4dcb5f4-7e82-11ea-8013-1b6da0e4a2b7_story.html%253Ftid%253Dlk_inline_manual_15%2526itid%253Dlk_inline_manual_15%26i%3D4%26d%3DlNWPjrRVTeKKPtH-brmPZA%26e%3Ddrhays%2540theperformingedge.com%26a%3DTdOPbn6ZRqCBkHhCSUULlA%26s%3De9vEG8eYaWQ&data=02%7C01%7Ctshigeno%40adler.edu%7Ce120fd33848d4daab00f08d7f8dd5a58%7C9de910667ccb4483a226fd27d4b9c570%7C0%7C0%7C637251501888670155&sdata=Lv8BWMeZe1TeDKLmByyKLi2CWov9TIGnHgCL7MFlvb4%3D&reserved=0) of getting sick.

 Exercise is also an excellent tool for stress management. For many of Harrison’s clients, it provides an important outlet. She coaches an infectious-disease doctor who hops on her treadmill for 30 minutes at 10 p.m. to decompress after work.

Front-line workers aren’t the only ones feeling pressure; adapting to a virtual work environment comes with its own challenges.

“It is stressful sitting at your screen all day and having all these meetings and having zero [in-person] communication,” Magness says. “We’ve shifted to being an indoor society, on screens. Especially now, [exercise] is a nice relief.”

Emmerman suggests going outside, if possible: “Nature is a wonderful equalizer to all the stressors.”

And while it won’t help to worry about the future, maintaining a base level of fitness will help prepare you for it. “You want to set yourself up to be firing on as many cylinders as you can as things move forward,” Emmerman says.

**Be kind to yourself.** First, don’t beat yourself up or attempt to power through if your drive is low right now. “Give yourself time to get through almost what I call the grieving moment,” Magness says. He says it’s important to allow yourself to “wallow” or do “whatever you need to do.”

Harrison agrees. She says if you can’t muster the energy to work out for a day or even a week, “Give yourself some grace.”

 But that doesn’t mean throwing in the towel indefinitely. “At some point, you have to set some sort of expectation or set some sort of bar,” Magness says. “And that bar can be really low.” As a distance runner, he was running six to seven days a week with a focus on becoming “super fit for my next race” before the pandemic. Now, he’s focusing on staying happy, healthy and sufficiently fit to compete again when the opportunity arises. These days, he gives himself permission to walk instead of run.

 Magness says staying home has been especially challenging for his clients with young children. Instead of struggling to squeeze in challenging workouts, they’re going for walks with their kids “and maybe doing a few random exercises” — which he says is absolutely fine.

Harrison says that “the most important thing is continuing to move,” even if it’s only a 20-minute walk.

**Set new goals.** With our lives upended, many of our pre-[coronavirus](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdmanalytics2.com%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.washingtonpost.com%252Fhealth%252F2020%252F02%252F28%252Fwhat-you-need-know-about-coronavirus%252F%253Ftid%253Dlk_inline_manual_34%2526itid%253Dlk_inline_manual_34%26i%3D5%26d%3DlNWPjrRVTeKKPtH-brmPZA%26e%3Ddrhays%2540theperformingedge.com%26a%3DTdOPbn6ZRqCBkHhCSUULlA%26s%3DoNSkx5ZOR8c&data=02%7C01%7Ctshigeno%40adler.edu%7Ce120fd33848d4daab00f08d7f8dd5a58%7C9de910667ccb4483a226fd27d4b9c570%7C0%7C0%7C637251501888670155&sdata=u%2B9h%2FYyM%2BM%2BKZ3392is%2BD%2Fas1emapTPlbxfAIOA7n9A%3D&reserved=0) fitness goals no longer make sense. If that’s your situation, select a new goal that accounts for your circumstances and priorities. The more meaningful your target, Magness says, the more committed you’ll be to it, so choose wisely.

 Right now, he’s encouraging his athletes to focus on outcomes that are unrelated to performance. Before the coronavirus, his workouts served to prepare him for racing; now the goal is time to himself and a welcome escape from Zoom calls. “It provides this nice little anchor to the day,” he says.

Emmerman advises asking yourself what you can do to make yourself feel better as you select fitness goals right now. If, for example, you struggle with back pain, your goal could be to experience no more than two days per week of pain greater than three out of 10 on the pain scale. Achieving the goal might mean completing three 20-minute mat Pilates sessions per week with a YouTube instructor or engaging in yoga or a stretching routine for 15 minutes per day, if those activities tend to be helpful.

**Stay accountable.** Once you select a goal, being accountable, even if only to yourself, can help you achieve it. Harrison suggests keeping a simple chart on your phone or your fridge where you can check a box for every day you work out.

 Friends and family members can also help you stay on track. If you live in a part of the country where it’s allowed, Harrison suggests getting some fresh air with a friend. “Put a mask on and go for a walk with your best friend and laugh for 30 minutes,” she says.

 You could also compete against or collaborate with others, whether it’s over Zoom, or in person with roommates or family. For example, you and your workout buddies could challenge one another to increase your maximum push-up repetitions by a certain percentage each week or compete to see who can do more on any given day, Emmerman says. Even if your workout buddy slacks off, the temptation to test yourself can still be motivating, she says.

Since the coronavirus took hold, Harrison has been offering free group challenges each month that are open to anyone; the goal is to accrue as many points as possible. May’s participants earn points for doing 15 minutes of yoga, completing a bike or run workout without music, or completing 15 minutes of dryland swim drills, to name a few.

**Look forward.** If you’re feeling too tired to exercise, Emmerman suggests focusing not on how low you feel now but on how energized you’ll be when you’re done, or how you might feel if you skip it. “A body at rest wants to stay at rest, and a body in movement wants to stay moving,” she says. Changing clothes and starting can be the biggest hurdles.

The promise of a post-workout treat can also entice you to lace up your tennis shoes, Emmerman says. A reward might be a dessert or a meal you’ve been looking forward to or anything else you enjoy, such as a show, a hot bath or a scented candle.

Finally, it’s important to stay optimistic, Harrison says. Believing the future will bring races, events and workouts among friends is vital. “Hope is not a plan and hope is not a strategy,” she says, “but it sure as heck is a motivating factor for people.”