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One morning not long ago my motivation was at a major low point.

I had plans to meet a friend at Zumba, but when I woke at 7 a.m., it was raining, I had a cramp in my leg, and, frankly, staying in bed and finishing that dream about Jake Gyllenhaal seemed a thousand times more appealing than yanking off the covers and heading out into the gray gloom. But then I heard an urgent whisper in my ear: "Get up and get your workout out of the way now; you can always rest later!" It was Janet Evans speaking. Yes, *that*

More Energy Every Day

Stop falling off the workout wagon. Our 12 simple strategies will help you outsmart your inner slacker and harness more mojo to get up and go.

By Marisa Cohen

Janet Evans, the Olympic swimmer who won four gold medals at the 1988 and 1992 Olympic Games. She mentioned this mantra in an interview I watched decades ago. I stuck it in my back pocket back then, and I pull it out for the ultimate kick in the butt when I need it most.

Mantras, rewards and other little tricks of the mind can be the perfect way to jump-start your motivation on days your energy is lagging, says sports psychologist JoAnn Dahlkoetter, Ph.D., the author of *Your Performing Edge*. "If you find a ritual that works for you and repeat it over time, your body will instantly respond when you need that extra push," she says. So I decided to ask a few world-class athletes, trainers, psychologists and FITNESS readers how they get motivated to move it.



Get mojo from your mini-me.

"When I used to swim, it was always for external goals, like scholarships or world records," explains Evans, who, as a 40-year-old mother of two, came back to the games after 16 years, hoping to qualify for the 2012 London Olympics. "Now it's more personal. I remind myself that I'm showing my 5-year-old daughter that if you set a goal and work hard for it, you can achieve anything. Yesterday she said to me, 'Mommy, you smell like chlorine.' And I said, 'Get used to it, girl!'"

Go for instant gratification.

Sure, working out can help lower your risk for cancer, heart disease and a slew of other scary illnesses. But those long-term benefits seem

awfully abstract when you're trying to tear yourself away from *New Girl* to go to the gym. "Our research found that the women who stick with exercise programs are the ones who do it for benefits they can experience immediately, such as having more energy or feeling less stress," says Michelle Segar, Ph.D., the associate director of the University of Michigan Sport, Health and Activity Research and Policy Center for Women and Girls. She suggests starting a journal to jot down reasons to exercise that will pay off today—to be more alert for an afternoon meeting, to snap less at your kids—and reviewing it when you need a

push. So long, Zooeey Deschanel; hello, treadmill.

Star in a mental movie.

"Visualization is a great tool: I see myself at my healthiest, fittest and strongest, doing different athletic endeavors. This motivates me to go the extra mile and skip the junk food," says Jennifer Cassetta, a celebrity trainer and holistic nutritionist in Los Angeles. "Picturing yourself accomplishing something may create a neural pathway in your brain in almost the same way as actually completing the feat would," explains Kathleen Martin Ginis, Ph.D., a professor of health and exercise psychology at McMaster University in Canada. "It also gives you a burst

of confidence that you can succeed, which makes you more likely to continue your training." Use all five senses to make your internal blockbuster as realistic as possible: See the clock at the finish line, hear the roar of the crowd as you turn the final corner of the race and feel your arms pumping as you stride across those last few yards.

Use mint over matter.

If you need an extra kick to get yourself out of that desk chair and onto the stationary bike, pop a stick of peppermint gum into your mouth. "The peppermint scent activates the area of our brain that puts us to sleep at night and wakes us up in the morning," explains researcher Bryan Raudenbush, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Wheeling Jesuit University. "More stimulation in this area of the brain leads to more energy and motivation to perform your athletic tasks."

Repeat yourself.

Feeling discouraged? Do a workout you know



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you can rock. In a study of more than 5,000 people, published in the journal *BMC Public Health*, researchers found that those who were confident they could keep up an exercise routine were the ones who would do it regularly. "It's a self-fulfilling prophecy," sports psychologist Kathryn Wilder, Ph.D., says. "The more you believe you can complete the workout program, the more you'll actually follow through with it." Let's say you dream of running a marathon, but the longest race you've done is a half, and the full 26.2 miles gives you the heebie-jeebies. Build up your confidence by registering for one more half before you move on to a longer distance.

Get it over with.

Researchers in the United Kingdom have figured out a possible reason morning exercisers tend to keep at their fitness routine. In a study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, subjects were able to bike for 18 percent longer after watching a movie than after doing 90 minutes of mental exercises on a computer. Why? All that thinking makes you feel tired before you've actually exhausted your muscles. So the worst time to go to the gym is when you're mentally kaput after a stressful day at work. Trouble is, bouncing out

of bed and into your sneaks is easier said than done. My trick? Good old bribery—of the caffeinated variety. If I make it to that morning class, I reward myself with a Starbucks on the way home. But if I stay under the covers, my morning mug is sludgy: I'm stuck microwaving the leftover coffee in the refrigerator.

An easy, breezy way to boost your workout mojo: Pop a stick of peppermint gum. The scent stimulates the area of your brain that tells you to get your butt in gear.

Let go of your inner geek.

A study from the University of Alberta in Canada found that humiliation in gym class (dodgeball, anyone?) can turn people off from fitness for good. Amy Hanna, 44, of New York City can relate. "I was a klutzy kid who hated PE," she says. "But when I started working out as an adult, I realized that it's about meeting my own goals, like running 10 miles or squatting my body weight. When a couple of women I know recently asked me to help them get in shape, I knew that the horrors

of junior high gym were behind me." Reminding yourself that you're not being judged or graded can help you shake off the PE-class blues, says Billy Strean, Ph.D., a professor of physical education at the University of Alberta. "Going to the gym isn't about performing for someone else," he explains. "The only person you have to impress is yourself."

Engage in friendly competition.

Hop on a stationary bike next to someone who's superfit and you'll be motivated to work even harder, according to a new study from Santa Clara University, which

found that college students who exercised with a fitter partner exerted themselves more. Ask a friend whose abs you admire if you can tag along on her next workout, or introduce yourself to that superstar in your Spinning class and make sure always to grab a bike next to hers.

Read about it.

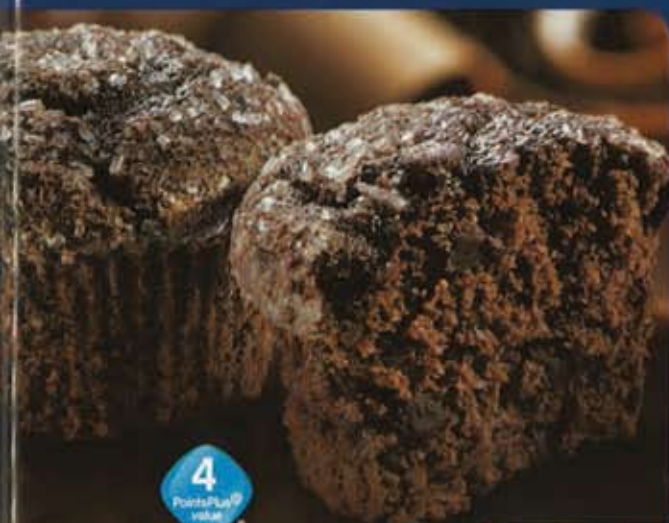
When world-champion indoor track star Lolo Jones needs a little extra oomph, she heads to the bookstore. "If you're in a lull, the best thing to do is to pick up a book about your sport," Jones says. "Go read about running or biking or whatever your passion is. You'll be eager to try

out the tips you learn." We love getting lost in the life stories of amazing athletes. Two new titles to check out: *Solo: A Memoir of Hope*, about Hope Solo's rise to superstardom as the U.S. women's soccer team goalkeeper and an Olympic gold medalist, and *Road to Valor*, a must-read for history buffs about two-time Tour de France winner Gino Bartali, who helped Italian Jews escape persecution during World War II.

Join the club.

"When I talk to my non-running friends about my workouts, their eyes tend to glaze over, so I joined a local track club,"

says Lisa Smith, 43, of Brooklyn. "It's great to share stories with them, and the social aspect keeps me coming back and working harder." In addition to the camaraderie and support, group training fosters a healthy sense of guilt, Martin Ginis says: You don't want to let down the team by blowing off a workout. "Talking to your friends can also distract you when you're exhausted and tempted to quit," Smith says. Find a gang to pass the miles with at the Road Runners Club of America's website at rrca.org. If you have kids, check out seemommyrun.com, which has more than 5,400 jogging



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groups throughout the United States.

Tuck in early.

Turns out, getting more zzz's could put a little pep in your step. In one Stanford University study, when basketball players logged 10 hours or more in bed a night for five to seven weeks, they sprinted faster, made more accurate shots and felt less fatigued. Consistently going to bed 30 or 45 minutes earlier instead of watching TV or surfing the Web may well pay off at the gym.

Fine-tune your workout.

Lindsey Vonn, the Olympic champion downhill skier, psychs herself up with booming bass and rocking rhymes. "Listening to rap—Lil Wayne, Drake, Jay-Z—in the morning before my races gets me fired up to go 90 miles per hour," she explains. She's onto something. According to research at Brunel University in England, listening to music can increase your

endurance by 15 percent because your brain gets distracted by the songs and may miss the "I'm tired" signal. Plus the emotional connection to beloved tunes can give you a sense of euphoria that keeps you going. Maximize your musical motivation with apps that sync your playlist to your pace, like Lolo BeatBurn for the treadmill and elliptical trainer (\$4 each, iTunes store) and RecordBeater (\$5, Android Market). ●

