

What's Your "Why?"

By Joan Maiden

My summer project was painting the exterior of my house and my garage. At sixty-three, many people told me I couldn't do it and was crazy to take on such a big project by myself. I had the strength and stamina to do it which gave me a sense of satisfaction, not to mention, saving a lot of money. For me, as a baby boomer, remaining independent and being able to tackle whatever I want, is my why—why I stick to my fitness plan.



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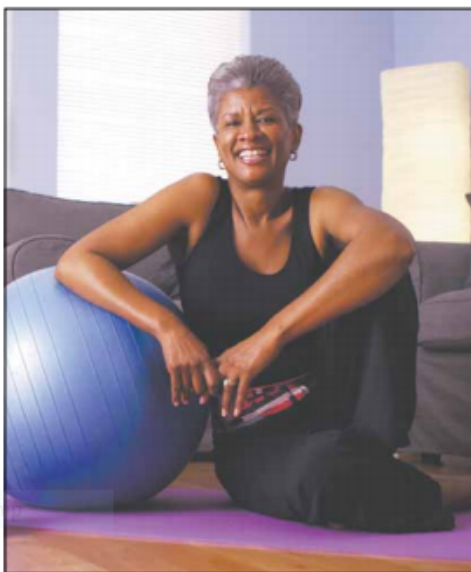
Have you set health and fitness goals only to give up before you reach them or signed up for a gym membership you rarely used? How many programs have you started and stopped? You are not alone. Eighty percent of people who join a gym quit within five months. Sixty-seven percent of the active members don't use the gym on a regular basis. In fact, gyms count on these statistics. They

expect only eighteen percent of those who join to actually use the gym.

Even with good intentions and definite goals, seventy-three percent give up before they reach their fitness goals. What is the problem? Why do we set goals and then give up? The problem may be the goal. What's your why? How meaningful are your goals to you? No matter what the media, your friends, your doctor or even the trainer at the gym thinks your goal should be, if the goal is not extremely important to you, you will never stick to a program long enough to achieve it.

For eighty-five-year-old Shirley, her "why" was "I'm vain, I want to look good." When Lynn, an obese fifty-year old came to train, I assumed it was to lose weight. When asked about her diet, her comeback was "don't f*ck with my food." Becoming more mobile, not weight loss, was her goal and gaining mobility dramatically changed the quality of her life. Karen, at seventy-two, wanted to look great in a sleeveless dress when she remarried (and she did). Elaine wanted to regain her strength after a long illness.

Your why may be to travel more easily, be able to play with your grandkids or take your dog for a



walk. Like Shirley, looking great may be important to you. Your why is personal. Deciding what is important to you will improve the quality of your life and you'll find it easier to stick to a plan and accomplish whatever goals you set.

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