

SHOULD YOU EXERCISE WHEN YOU'RE TIRED?

YOU WANT TO REST UP BECAUSE YOU'RE TIRED, BUT YOU FEEL GUILTY ABOUT NOT GOING TO THE GYM. SHOULD YOU REST WHEN YOU'RE TIRED OR WILL WORKING OUT GIVE YOU MORE ENERGY? **JEFF ARCHER** HAS THE ANSWER

Personal Trainer
FOR WOMEN

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EXPERT

Exercise can give you energy. We've all experienced times when we felt exhausted, ready to drop, as if nothing on Earth could drag us to the gym or get us out running or cycling. Then, somehow, we break on through. We manage to get ourselves going again and, miraculously, we feel better for doing so.

Getting our bodies moving, the blood pumping and the oxygen flowing stimulates us physically and mentally, often to the point where we feel more energetic after exercising than we did before we started. Your body was designed for movement and it doesn't like to be still for too long. Sitting at work and concentrating mentally, or sitting at home focusing on the TV can stimulate the brain, often to the point of fatigue, and this can make you feel physically tired. The truth of it is that you're not physically tired, you just feel as though you are because your limbs haven't been fully used for a while. So if you re-activate your body through a bit of movement, you can stimulate muscles, nerves, cells, body and brain back into full and effective action.

Work with how you feel

An important thing to remember if exercising when tired is to work within the parameters of how you feel. It will be good for you to exercise but think carefully about how much activity you're going to take on. A walk, a jog, a bike ride or a Pilates or yoga class may work wonders for you if you're feeling less than a 100 per cent, but don't be tempted to take on your usual full workout or an intensive class such as circuit training or a strenuous boxing fitness class which could leave you feeling dreadful. Worse than that, you could injure yourself and end up out of action for a while.

Always put safety first and be honest with yourself. If you really are just too tired and to exercise would be unsafe or distressing, leave it for now and do something when you feel more up to it. If you feel as though you're capable of something gentle, modify your usual programme and enjoy training at a different pace for once. Avoid thinking that if you can't do a full workout, it's not worth

doing anything. You'll still be keeping fit and you might learn something about what it's like to vary your training routine a bit.

If you feel exceptionally tired, you may just want to go to bed. Ironically, putting that moment off while you take some physical activity will probably increase the quality of your sleep. This happens because exercised limbs are more inclined to relax than lazy limbs that have a tendency to twitch and keep you awake. Exercise also changes your mental state and allows you to distract your focus while the issues of the day sort themselves out at the back of your mind. The result for some people is that they sleep for a shorter time but get a better rest. Others sleep for longer and more deeply. Whichever sleeping pattern you achieve, you're pretty much guaranteed to feel less sluggish and more productive on waking and getting into your routine the next day.

So, should you exercise when you're tired? The answer is yes if you can follow these rules:

- **Be safe. If there's any chance at all that you'll injure yourself, give it a miss for now.**
- **Do the right workout. Decide what you're capable of based on how you feel and adapt your routine to suit.**
- **Stop if you need to. If you go for it but feel worse then stop immediately before you do any damage. ■**

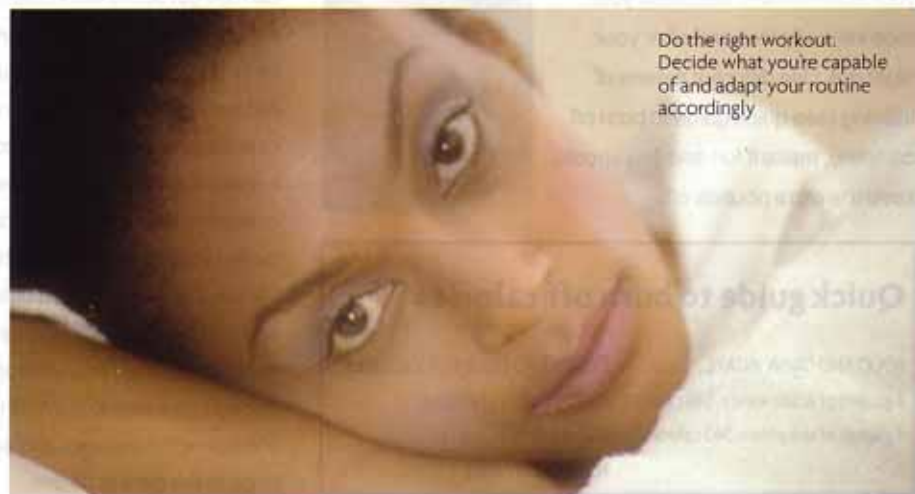
When not to exercise

If you're beginning to feel ill you may still be able to exercise but be careful. Go gently because your capacity for exercise will naturally be reduced as your body tries to fight off the illness.

If you feel groggy above the neck and are suffering from cold symptoms, sore eyes or a runny nose, you're OK to exercise gently as long as you're safe and won't make your symptoms worse. If your bones are aching and you display symptoms of 'flu such as shivering or feeling hot and cold, you should rest until you feel better.

You may, however, be able to exercise outside with a walk or a gentle jog or bike ride. The fresh air will do you the world of good.

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Do the right workout. Decide what you're capable of and adapt your routine accordingly