

Get fired up!

You already have the so-easy plan, oodles of support and a better-body-in-four-weeks guarantee. All you need now? Inspiration!

Let's be real: You can *want* a slimmer you by swimsuit season, but to see results, you have to *do* actual workouts. That means getting off the couch, even on days when you'd rather not. To make that easier, try this three-step, no-fuss, no-fail, no-matter-what-is-on-TV plan by Michael Vallis, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. —Andrea Bartz



Write your motivators on Post-its. Stick them here.

STEP 1: Find your spark!

First, jot down something about yourself that you'd like to change—say, the way your arms keep waving after you stop. At SELF, we rarely give you permission to dislike something about yourself, but in this case, it will actually help. Why? A negative feeling (spark) is strong enough to get you past powerful inertia—*then* you can operate from a more positive frame of mind. "Once you identify the problem, you'll work to fix it," Vallis says.

I want a little less honky-tonk in my badonkadonk.



The spark

STEP 2: Fan it into a flame!

Now you break the solution to your problem (exercise) into mini-goals ("I'll take a walk every day this week") to bring you closer to kissing that body bummer good-bye. By dividing a program into readily achievable chunks, you'll stay stoked. "Success is addictive," Vallis says. "When you reach one goal, you will be inspired to keep going." Then reward yourself with fun treats such as that new Lady Gaga song on iTunes.



If I work out four times this week, I'll get a manicure on Friday.

The flame

STEP 3: Keep it burnin'!

So your muffin top is melting and your goal is in sight, but you're losing steam? Like adding fuel to a fire, establishing long-term goals feeds your drive long after you've shimmied into those Levi's. Check out two ways to think big-picture.

CLING TO WHAT COUNTS Write down a few things that are super important to you—your kids or your job, for example. Then ask yourself, How will being fit affect these VITs (Very Important Things)? If you're career-minded, a sleek physique might make you feel more in control and energetic in the office. "When you connect your larger life principles to your health, you realize your body is worth investing in," Vallis says.

DIG DEEPER Another tack: Make like a toddler and ask, Why? Quiz yourself on the reason your goal matters to you. Got an answer? Ask why you care about *that*. Keep querying until you've burrowed down to the true reason you want flat abs or a tight butt. You'll know you've hit pay dirt when you touch on something that strikes a true chord with you. "That motivation will keep you going for life," Vallis says. Blaze on!

I want to have a family, and I want to be able to run around with my kids. Heck, my grandkids, too!



Burn, baby, burn.

Hmmm, why do I really want to lose 8 pounds? Because I want to feel sexy, confident and on my game, at work and after hours.

