

Two Are Better than One

By Woodland Publishing, Inc.

Think there's no time in your busy schedule for exercise *and* a relationship? Think again. Fitness and romance mix well and recent research by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services suggests that couples that lift weights together lose weight together.

Exercising together allows couples to spend more time together each day and may lead to an improved love life. For couples with busy schedules, workout time can be an opportunity to squeeze more together time into the day. David Di Paolo, host of the *Fitness Over 40* program at the University of Texas, said, "I'm a big fan of couples working out together. It's a great time to spend quality time together, especially when lives get hectic with work and kids."

Exercise is also a potent aphrodisiac. As reported on the Discovery Health Web site, exercise triggers the release of endorphins (the neurochemicals responsible for the so-called runner's high), which increase sex drive. The American Council on Exercise reports that regular exercise may reduce the risk of impotence in men and improve sexual response in women.

Research also suggests that those who exercise with their partner are more likely to stick to their program than those who go at it alone. Working out with a partner provides the motivation many people need to exercise consistently. A review published in 2002 in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* reported that companionship and support lead to increased physical activity and decreased body fat. A formal support system isn't necessary—simply having an exercise buddy is enough to provide significant results.

Double the Fun

Couples that want to exercise together have many options. Experts suggest choosing activities that appeal to common interests, but both partners should be open to new activities and willing to compromise. The following exercise activities are ideal:

1. *Yoga*. Practicing yoga with a significant other is an opportunity to relax and bond while improving fitness. Darrin Zeer, author of *Lovers' Yoga*, said, "Stretching with your loved one turns the tables on the rat race, allowing you both to be in the moment and renewing your connection."
2. *Spinning*. These popular classes allow partners to workout side by side on indoor cycles. Because the equipment is stationary, both partners can go as easy—or hard—as they want. This also works on treadmills and other cardio machines.
3. *Strength training*. Strength training is important for everyone. "Many women overlook or shy away from strength training, but it's just as important for women, who need to preserve bone density and prevent osteoporosis," said Di Paolo. When you lift weights with your partner, you enjoy the benefit of having a trusted companion to spot you.
4. *Racquet sports*. Tennis, racquetball and squash are perfect sports for couples. All you need is a court, some racquets and a ball. Play nice and easy for an enjoyable workout, or go all out in a no-holds-barred battle for bragging rights!

Any activity that gets you off the couch moving is good for you—even activities you may not consider exercise. Dancing, hiking and gardening are activities to enjoy with a partner while incorporating physical activity your life. So whatever activity you and your loved one enjoy, get out and do it!