

**Find Your Exercise "Pleasure Point":**

A study done last year at Iowa State University found that beginners were surprisingly accurate when it came to predicting their level of exercise intensity. What did they base it on? A heart monitor? Some sophisticated lab testing? Nope. They knew when they were exercising too hard when it was no longer pleasurable.

"As astonishingly simple as it sounds," says lead researcher **Dr. Paddy Ekkekakis**, "the most appropriate level of exercise intensity is the intensity that does not feel unpleasant." Of course, physical exertion by

definition requires effort (there's a reason they call it a workout).

Still, this study suggests that when it comes to exercise, what feels good for us

and what is good for us may be closely related. So while dispelling the old cliché of "no pain, no gain," the research gives new meaning to another hoary bit of exercise advice: Listen to your body. If it's saying, "I like this," you're on the right path to fitness.

**Roll with the punches and don't let one missed activity session end your program.**



**Protect Your Skin:**

A walk in the fresh air is just what the doctor ordered, but the doctor might also remind you about the dangers of overexposure to the sun. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. To minimize the risk, the Academy recommends a few common sense procedures when you head out for your daily activity this summer:

- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15 on all exposed skin, including the lips.
- Wear a broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- Wear protective, tightly-woven clothing.
- Plan your activity to avoid peak sunlight hours (10a.m. – 4p.m.)

**Don't Let a Lapse Lead to a Collapse:**

When trying to change any kind of behavior, most people will experience a lapse. The key, says Toronto-based sport psychologist Dr. Kate Hays, author of *Move Your Body, Tone Your Mood*,\* is to roll with the punches and not let one missed activity session end your program. Think of the dieter who has one bite of chocolate cake and concludes, "it's all over now." It's not. But that kind of thinking may lead you in that direction. Instead of throwing your hands up in the air over one missed workout, put one foot in front of the other as soon as you can, and get yourself back on track.

**Monitor Your Progress:**

New exercisers are often advised to keep some kind of diary or training log. Why? "Keeping a record helps focus your attention on the behavior you are trying to change," says Dr. Blair. "And the more attention you're paying, the more likely you are to make those changes." If you're diligent about your record keeping, you'll be able to see your progress. You'll also be able to spot problems in your training. Bottom line: As the days and weeks go on, you'll be able to discern patterns. "You can use that information to set goals," Blair says, "then by continued monitoring you can determine your progress towards those goals."

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\* Published by New Harbinger, \$17.95

**MORE TIPS...**

For more tips, see *Active Living Every Day: 20 Steps to Lifelong Vitality*. Coauthored by Dr. Steve Blair and his colleagues at the Cooper Institute, the book is available through Human Kinetics for \$24.95. Additional on-line material is available as well. Visit [www.activeliving.info](http://www.activeliving.info) or call 800-747-4457.