



# Health, *Mind* & BODY

*January 2021*

**10 Workout Myths**

**5 Myths About Loneliness**

**Dealing With Burnout During Our Pandemic**

**Feel The Health Benefits Of Yoga**



*A Special Section From*

# The Malone Telegram



# 10 workout myths

Mayo Clinic News Network

**Dear Mayo Clinic: I eat fairly healthy, but I want to lose weight and improve my physical wellness in the new year. I'm finding a lot of conflicting information about the best workouts for weight loss, the amount of time I need to work out and what food I should eat. Can you help me make sense of it so I can plan a routine?**

A: Being proactive to achieve long-term health and wellness is important, and you should be proud of your efforts to set fitness goals and develop routines. However, among research, personal opinion and stereotypes, a lot of misinformation can make it hard to know what is accurate.

Here is the truth about the top 10 workout myths that you should consider as you develop your game plan:

**Myth 1: Stick solely to cardio for weight loss.**

While it's true that you should include

20-30 minutes of cardio in your workout routine, focusing solely on cardio will not transform your body as quickly or as dramatically as you might think.

People perceive cardio as the ultimate solution because their heart rate is up. But in reality, you need to incorporate both cardio and strength training into your workout. Strength training builds muscles and maximizes your cardio routine. The more muscle you have, the more calories your body will burn, especially during cardio.

**Myth 2: Heavy weights will bulk you up.**

Some people are concerned that adding strength training will build muscle bulk to the point that they will look like a bodybuilder. This is not true. You would have to work out excessively to do so. Start slow and add weight to build muscle, which will maximize the calories your body will burn.

**Myth 3: If you work out today, you can**

be lax in your diet.

Working out is important, but so is having good nutrition. You can't work off a bad diet. Food is fuel, and proper nutrition guarantees results. If you want to lose weight, your calorie output needs to be higher than your calorie input.

**Myth 4: Stretching helps prevent injuries.**

If you grew up playing sports, stretching before a game was a regular routine. However, you might be surprised to learn that while stretching is beneficial because it prepares the muscles for movement and eases your workout recovery there is no proven research that it will reduce your chances of getting an injury. That's entirely based on your form and movements during a workout. Use functional, dynamic stretches like lunges and leg swings to help muscle movement during workouts.

**Myth 5: If the number on the scale isn't going down, you're not losing**

**weight.**

Many people focus on the number on the scale, but it is not the best representation of body changes. The number on the scale is a factor of many things, including how much water you've consumed, what you ate and when you're weighing in. Often when a person loses a significant amount of weight, the number on the scale goes up because of building muscle from exercise.

If you want to accurately track your weight loss and muscle development, record measurements of your arms, waist and thighs. And if you're going to use the scale, weigh yourself at the same time every day.

**Myth 6: Cardio machines count burned calories with 100% accuracy.**

Some people depend on the treadmill to tell them an exact number of calories burned during a workout. Unfortunately,

See **WORKOUT 3**

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# Workout

From 2

ly, this metric isn't 100% accurate. Many factors determine how many calories your body burns, including your sex, age and current weight. Some machines allow you to enter personalized data in one or two of these factors but rarely all three.

## Myth 7: Sticking to ab workouts will give you a six-pack.

Abdominal workouts are great for developing core muscles because they benefit your body in many ways, such as improving your balance and stability. However, a person's overall body fat prevents abs from being seen. If you want six-pack abs, you have to dramatically decrease your body fat to 10%-12% for men or 11%-13% for women. While possible, this requires strict dedication to eating a healthy diet and exercising.

## Myth 8: Supplements and protein shakes are necessary after workouts.

Supplements and protein shakes are not necessary. The benefits they offer are available from natural and direct food sources, such as chocolate milk, turkey or a scoop of peanut butter. The truth is you don't need supplements and shakes to get proper nutrients. You can get those nutrients from other food sources.

## Myth 9: If you're not working up a sweat, you're not working hard enough.

Sweating is an inaccurate way to measure your workout. Many factors go into the amount a person sweats, such as the temperature, humidity and hydration levels. Your body just could be efficient at cooling itself, as well.

## Myth 10: No pain, no gain.

While feeling uncomfortable during a workout is normal, feeling pain is not. Many athletes live by the "no pain, no gain" motto, but pain is the way your body tells you that something is wrong. If you start to feel pain during a workout, stop immediately. If you continue to push through it, you could end up with a serious injury.

# Dealing with burnout during our pandemic

By JUDI LIGHT HOPSON

Tribune News Service

Are you feeling tired and weary dealing with the same problems every day? You likely wake up thinking about COVID-19. Then you crawl out of bed and view the numbers on TV. Next, you gauge how you'll cope for the next 24 hours.

You know you have coronavirus burnout. You need some changes, but what can you do differently?

In order to cope, while we're all waiting to turn the corner, try focusing on the vaccine that's coming. It's the first real hope we've had in months. Then, get busy making some small changes in your life.

"The pandemic is causing something akin to boredom on steroids," says a psychologist we'll call Thomas.

Thomas goes on to explain it this way: "Eating chocolate pie over and over will make you sick. People need variety in their lives."

To pull yourself out of burnout mode, try these changes:

- **Keep a notebook of nice things to do for yourself.** The list might include something as simple as going for a hike or driving in the country for a couple of hours. List affordable, achievable activities or rituals (such as calling old friends) you've neglected to do. Again, strive for variety.

- **Improve your environment.** We all grow tired of our home decor, furniture, and yard landscaping. Do something simple such as painting some furniture, cleaning out your closets, or buying a gas firepit for your patio.

- **Make a contribution to a non-profit in your community.** Volunteer to pack boxes of food for a food bank or design a webpage to help families connect with free medical care. Invest your time in something larger than yourself at least once a week.

- **Learn something you've neglected to pursue in the past.** For example, pull out that guitar you bought years ago and learn some chords.



**Working harder and harder will not fix burnout. This just creates a feeling of spinning your wheels.** Pexels

Or, ask your daughter to teach you how to use technology to set up a group chat with your friends.

Working harder and harder will not fix burnout. This just creates a feeling of spinning your wheels.

"I feel trapped in my work routine, home schooling my kids, and trying to keep my husband happy while we wait for the world to change," says a computer programmer we'll call Rosanna. "I keep count-

ing my blessings, but I still feel depressed."

Burnout comes from expending too much energy without getting the "rewards" we expect from our efforts. We dread our routines, because the payoffs we'd like don't materialize.

"I'm one of those people who gives a hundred and ten percent," says an accountant we'll call Tina. "My work has to be perfect, my house has to be extremely neat and clean,

and yes, I want to have a husband who will never leave me," she laughs.

Tina recently decided to back away from burnout, however. Her biggest clues were the dark blue circles under her eyes and a big argument she'd had with her husband.

"I'm so burned out," she emphasizes. "I dream of a month-long vacation and having dinner with my old college friends. Instead, I've been working many hours of overtime and pushing my husband to cook and clean. Hence, the big blowup."

Tina made the decision a couple of weeks ago to stop working weekends. She and her husband also began cooking dinner together at six every evening. They both clean house for two hours every Saturday afternoon. And, they've spent the last two Sundays connecting with family and friends online or by phone.

"We're trying to change things a bit," says Tina. "There's nothing worse than every day feeling like the day before."

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# Feel *the health benefits of* **YOGA**

*Practice can help joints, nervous system and balance*

Mayo Clinic News Network

**DEAR MAYO CLINIC:** I have always been fairly flexible, so I have never felt compelled to include yoga in my fitness routine. Typically, I just walk and maybe do some weights for strength training. I was talking to a friend who said her physical therapist recommended yo-

**ga as part of a well-rounded workout routine. What is the benefit of yoga? Should I add it to my routine or stick with what I'm doing?**

**A:** Yoga is a wonderful form of exercise that provides benefits that walking or strength training don't provide. In Eastern cultures, yoga is not seen as exercise, but rather "a

moving meditation." In the Western world, many people know power yoga or vinyasa

See **YOGA 5**



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# Yoga

From 4

yoga, which are classified as exercise.

Regardless of the type of yoga, when practiced mindfully, there are many advantages for the body, mind and soul.

Yoga can provide three primary benefits that a typical gym routine may not provide.

## BENEFIT 1

Yoga improves the function of the nervous system. Since yoga is based on breathing, parts of the nervous system are affected when exhales are lengthened and breath is controlled. This is cued throughout particular yoga sequences. Specifically, yoga can help lower the fight-or-flight response and improve the body's "rest-and-digest" response.

Practicing slow, controlled breathing stimulates the body's vagus nerve, which takes information about the current state of relaxation and relays it to the rest of the body, including the brain. One area affected when the vagal nerve is stimulated is the parasympathetic nervous system, which controls the body's rest and digestion functions.

The mindful breathing practiced in yoga increases the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system. As a result, yoga lowers the heart rate, improves digestion and quality of sleep, and strengthens the immune system. Another benefit is an improved stress level.

## BENEFIT 2

Yoga can improve joint range of motion. The difference between flexibility and active range of motion is important. Think of flexibility as how much a muscle can be passively stretched.

In contrast, range of motion is how much muscles can be used to control a joint's movement.

It is not uncommon these days for people to report neck and back pain, and poor range of motion in their tho-

racic spine due to constant sitting, typing on computers and looking down at cell-phones.

Yoga is excellent in improving thoracic range of motion because many poses involve extending the body through the rib cage and using strength to hold these postures.

Yoga incorporates all four motions of the spine: flexion, extension, rotation and side-bending.

Therefore, yoga can prevent stiffness and disuse that also can occur with age. Being able to control the available range of motion in joints is crucial to good posture and decreasing the risk of injury.

## BENEFIT 3

Yoga improves dynamic balance, decreasing the risk of falling. Think of balance like a muscle. By working hard at different exercises, balance can improve. This is similar to improved strength by lifting weights.

Balance is a complex system, requiring three parts: the sensation of the foot on the ground, or proprioception; vision; and the inner ear, or vestibular system. These three parts tell the brain where the head is in space. These three components work together to control both static and dynamic balance.

Yoga trains the proprioception and visual systems to improve balance. Depending on the pose, cues are sent to focus, for instance, on the foot rooted to the ground. By concentrating in an attempt to maintain contact, the big toe, little toe and heel form a tripod of sorts, which in turn helps focus the proprioception portion of balance.

In yoga, you may hear the term "drishti," which refers to obtaining a focused gaze or focus in the mind. The concept comes into play as people aim to hold a pose with their eyes closed.

Certain poses become more challenging with eyes closed, which improves the visual part of balance.

Also, moving back and forth between poses without fully touching a limb to the ground can increase the

ability to dynamically move and not lose balance. Over time, this will reduce the risk of falling while walking on uneven ground or turning

quickly.

While it may be hard to add one more thing to your busy life routine, incorporating yoga into your work-

out routine can benefit your stress level, mobility and balance in ways that may not be achieved from a regular gym routine.

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# 5 myths about loneliness

By **NOREENA HERTZ**

Washington Post

Lots of people are lonely these days. Months of stay-at-home orders and other limits on face-to-face contact are taking their toll. But even before the pandemic introduced us to terms like “social distancing,” loneliness was a defining condition of the 21st century: More than a fifth of U.S. adults said in a 2018 Kaiser Family Foundation survey that they “often” or “always” felt lonely, lacking in companionship, left out or isolated. Britain even appointed a minister for loneliness three years ago to confront the problem. But why did we become so lonely? Who is most afflicted? And what harms does it cause? Misconceptions persist around each of these questions; here are five of the most common.

## MYTH NO. 1

### The elderly are the loneliest generation

Articles on loneliness often focus on the risk for older people: “Baby boomers are aging alone more than any generation in U.S. history, and the resulting loneliness is a looming public health threat,” observed the Wall Street Journal in 2018. And the pandemic has brought a fresh wave of commentary about how older people are particularly affected by shutdown orders. In April, ABC News referred to loneliness as “the unspoken COVID-19 toll on the elderly.”

But while the elderly are lonelier than the average person, it’s actually the young whom study after study reveals as the loneliest. A 2018 analysis by Britain’s Office for National Statistics, for example, found that 10% of Britons ages 16 to 24 reported feeling lonely often or always, compared with 3% of those 65 and older. Among that younger cohort, a higher share than in any other group also felt lonely “some of the

time” - 23%.

Polls in the United States reveal a similar picture: In a 2019 YouGov survey, roughly 1 in 5 millennials reported having no friends at all. That was significantly higher than the proportion of Generation Xers or baby boomers who said they were friendless.

## MYTH NO. 2

### Loneliness is mainly a mental health problem

A 2019 post on loneliness on the British website Mind mentions only its influence on mental well-being: “Loneliness is associated with an increased risk of certain mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep problems and increased stress.” In 2015, a Psychology Today columnist similarly limited discussion of the effects of loneliness to mental disorders, linking it to depression, social anxiety, addiction and hoarding.

But loneliness has dire physical implications, too. If you are lonely or socially isolated, according to one review of 23 studies, you have a 29% higher risk of coronary heart disease and a 32% higher chance of stroke. A study of elderly people in group-living facilities in Amsterdam found that those who felt lonely had a 64% greater risk of developing clinical dementia. Overall, if you are lonely or socially isolated, you are almost 30% more likely to die prematurely than if you have companionship; statistically, loneliness is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. There’s even evidence that loneliness of limited duration can lead to an early death — potentially bad news for those of us living through the pandemic.

## MYTH NO. 3

### Open-plan offices deepen relations with co-workers

“Open plan offices fos-

See **MYTHS 7**



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# Myths

From 6

ter team spirit and create a social space,” explains the British firm Workspace Design and Build, supposedly leading to more collaboration and greater productivity. Meanwhile, in the Harvard Business Review, three University of Michigan researchers argue that even people who choose not to interact with others in open-office co-working spaces prefer them because “there is the potential for interactions when they desire or need them.”

Claims such as these are commonplace. But a study in the Academy of Management Review found that when people in open-plan offices did speak to one another, they tended to do so for shorter periods and more superficially, and they often censored themselves. What’s more, a Harvard Business School study that tracked office workers at two companies that shifted from cubicles to open plans found that the new architecture — far from enhancing sociability — seemed to “trigger a natural human response to socially withdraw” from colleagues. People opted for email and messaging instead of talking, contributing to a feeling of isolation.

This alienation is even worse if your office has bought into the idea of “hot desking” — having employees use whatever desk is available on a given day. With no place of one’s own, nowhere to hang family photos, and with a different “neighbor” every day, hot-desking workers feel an intense “sense of isolation,” one ethnographer of the practice observed.

## MYTH NO. 4

### City dwellers are less lonely than rural residents

“The challenge of dealing with loneliness is particularly acute in rural areas,” explains Apolitical, a website for civil servants. “Though tighter-knit communities can help reduce isolation, spread-out

rural populations also make it easier for isolated people . . . to lose human contact almost entirely.” Making the case that rural areas are more alienating than cities, a New York magazine writer leaned on a striking correlation: “States with the worst suicide rates are the least dense.” (Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico and Alaska have the highest rates, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.)

But loneliness strikes people wherever they live. The General Social Survey, a nationally representative survey of American adults, has several questions that probe issues related to loneliness, and it finds little if any difference among urban, suburban and rural residents. For instance, asked how often in the past four weeks they felt they had lacked companionship, 45% of urban residents, 45% of suburbanites and 49% of rural residents said “never.” Thirteen percent of city dwellers said they “often” or “very often” felt they lacked companionship; the comparable figure for suburban residents was 11%, and for rural denizens 14%. The hectic pace and anonymity of city life, it appears, at least partly offset the advantage cities bring in terms of proximity to other people.

## MYTH NO. 5

### Loneliness is a Western phenomenon

A commentator in the Times of India decried, in 2018, “the Western world’s loneliness epidemic.” And in an interview about loneliness, former surgeon general Vivek H. Murthy told Vox that culture bore much of the blame: “In many Western societies, there’s a lot more freedom to be who you are and a more open embrace of different identities. But the structures that ensure that people feel like they’re part of a community are limited.”

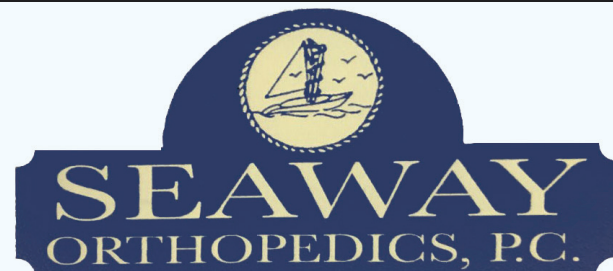
There is evidence that the more individualistic a society is, the more lonely its citizens tend to be; and there is considerable correlation between “individualism” and the West: The United States

and Britain both rank very high on that score. But loneliness is a public health crisis in the non-Western world, too. Nationally representative surveys find that roughly 28% of Chinese over 65 feel lonely — with some indications that the figure is rising (as is an increasingly individualistic mind-set). In India, a national survey in 2017 of 15,000 older citizens, conducted by the Agewell Foundation, found that 48% were lonely; the figure was even higher in cities.

In Japan, loneliness is also making headlines. There the proportion of crimes committed by people over age 60 has quadrupled over the past two decades — and observers believe that social isolation is a key driver of the trend. Some elderly commit minor offenses such as petty shoplifting specifically so they will end up in jail, because they have no family or friends to support them.

— — —

Hertz, an economist, is the author of the new book “The Lonely Century: How to Restore Human Connection in a World That’s Pulling Apart.”



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# Smooth a bumpy winter's ups and downs

Cross-country skiing is the perfect sport to battle cabin fever

By ERIN E. WILLIAMS

Washington Post

In Bend, Ore., winter arrived early this year, bringing a three-foot base to the Cascades by late November — as well as antsy Nordic skiers who pounced on the snow when the first flakes fell.

Awaiting them was Sunnyside Sports. Concerned with keeping its customers and staff safe yet wanting to help the community get outside, in October the local bicycle and cross-country ski shop decided to forgo daily ski rentals and instead offer season-long leases. Its rental stock was cleaned out by the following day.

As the pandemic grinds on and restrictions and winter worsen cabin fever, traversing our nearby trails brings essential mental and physical health benefits; cross-country skiing allows us to discover outdoor areas, enjoy nature and exercise while maintaining distance. And it's remarkably accessible, since you can ski nearly anywhere there's snow.

I also jumped on the season, taking advantage of this winter's storms to explore cross-country ski areas along part of the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway, which snakes into the mountains near my house in Bend. Several winter recreation areas flank the route, providing easy access to miles of skiing and snowshoeing trails in the Deschutes National Forest — as well as dazzling panoramas of surrounding peaks and volcanic landscapes.

Only 15 miles from town, nonprofit Meissner Nordic Ski Club partners with the Forest Service to operate about 25 miles of community trails at Virginia Meissner Sno-Park. Here, I found my snow legs on less-traveled routes that curved white ribbons through the conifers, then shared wide, perfectly groomed main tracks with other skiers. A few miles farther up the highway, my tracks intersected with wild critters' footprints at Swampy Lakes Sno-Park, where the Central Oregon Nordic Club maintains trails with the Forest Service. And I swooped down gentle hills on an approximately 9,000-foot mountain; Mt. Bachelor, the United States' sixth-largest ski resort, boasts approximately 35 miles of groomed Nordic trails and a season that can stretch into June.

Like other resorts, Mt. Bachelor is navigating an unprecedented winter in accordance with state and local health guidelines. Its "back to basics" approach includes online parking reservations and a requirement that visitors purchase passes, rentals and lessons before arrival. Food is grab-and-go at the lodge and food carts. Lodge and Nordic Center capacity is limited, with masking, one-way flow and distancing measures. For downhill skiers and snowboarders, lift access is distanced, with no requirement to ride with



**Under a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, the nonprofit Meissner Nordic Ski Club grooms approximately 25 miles of community trails for all levels of skiers at Virginia Meissner Sno-Park in the Deschutes National Forest near Bend, Ore.** Erin Williams/Washington Post

strangers; as usual, Nordic skiers don't use the lifts.

According to Mt. Bachelor, this year's season pass sales and parking reservations reflect a pent-up need for outdoor activities that lend themselves to distancing. The Professional Ski Instructors of America and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA-AASI) also forecast an uptick in cross-country skiing this winter.

"There's definitely been a noticeable increase in demand," said former Nordic skier Jeff Neagle. He has worked in the ski industry for 15 years, including the last five at Pinnacle Ski and Sports in Stowe, Vt. At this family-owned shop and its online storefront SkiEssentials.com, year-over-year cross-country ski sales skyrocketed more than 700% in November, Neagle said.

That's heartening news for snow-sport businesses — and for people who are discovering their nearby trails, since the activity can help initiate and maintain longevity-boosting behaviors.

"Cross-country skiing is low impact and weight-bearing, and its cardiovascular benefits are significant because you're using so many muscle groups," said Paul Anderson, a Nordic skier and occupational medicine physician at Minnesota-based

HealthPartners. He researches cross-country skiers' relationship with healthy practices. Participants tend to be interested in movement, eating well and avoiding unhealthy habits — and they support other community members' exercise, Anderson found.

"It also gets people into nature, which can help address anxiety and depression," he added. "Nature and outdoor therapy are becoming more widely understood as important components of mental health care."

The sport has a lower entry barrier than its downhill cousin, which has steeper slopes and learning curves. Cross-country, a type of Nordic skiing, has its own variations, including classic: the most popular and beginner-friendly method, which involves kicking and gliding forward with parallel skis, mimicking a walking rhythm.

"The best thing about cross-country skiing is that you can do it however you want," said Neagle. "There's not really an increased risk of injury if you're going slow, and it's a great workout whether you have existing technique or are figuring it out on your own."



# Smooth

From 8

According to Anderson, short outdoor lessons (where people are typically masked and distanced) can help students learn technique and how to handle gear. PSIA-AA-SI provides snow-sports school and instructor referrals, online guides for every level and even individual virtual instruction through a partnership with coaching tool Givego — which directly connects users with the country's top instructors. Nordic Ski Lab's and REI's videos can also help develop skills at home, from stepping into bindings to getting up after a tumble.

"The goal is to have fun, so don't get too hung up on whether or not you're doing it right," Neagle added. "Rather than focusing on the perfect technique, just enjoy shuffling around and growing your skills as you move forward."

According to the Cross Country Ski Areas Association (CCSAA), which maintains an online directory, there are more than 350 cross-country ski areas in the United States and Canada. Many are within an hour's drive of cities. Some are resorts like Mt. Bachelor that offer Nordic and downhill skiing, and others are Nordic-specific centers. Other locations include stand-alone trail systems, parks and golf courses. Some groom their trails, and light touring on un-groomed terrain is sometimes available. Many locations have trail maps online; beginner trails are marked green.

Staying local this season can keep skiers safer and avoid possible closures, shutdown restrictions, non-essential travel advisories and travel quarantines (even for weekend skiers).

In D.C., opportunities abound as close as Rock Creek Park. Maryland has a flurry of options, and West Virginia has trails in national forests, state parks and the White Grass Touring Center. Online, DCski.com features stories,



**A cross-country skier glides over some of Mt. Bachelor's approximately 35 miles of Nordic trails. MUST CREDIT: Photo by Erin Williams for The Washington Post.**

interviews and a community forum regarding snow sports throughout the Mid-Atlantic.

Part of cross-country skiing's appeal is that cost won't necessarily freeze out participants. With many free or low-cost local ski areas, access can be affordable. Gear rental is typically inexpensive, and some ski shops offer local delivery. In Bend, Mt. Bachelor offers one-day packages for \$35 as well as seasonal leases. Sunnyside Sports priced its rental packages for a rock-bottom \$50 to \$75 for the winter.

"When push comes to shove, we're here to serve," said Sunnyside Sports co-owner Susan Conner, who wanted to open the door for those who might have missed outdoor experiences this winter. "We've tried to continue to operate weighing how we can keep people safe while getting them outside."

Some local shops and online retailers also sell complete packages that eliminate guesswork for novice enthusiasts. Each package usually bundles skis, bindings, boots and poles; size charts are simple, with ski length based on body weight. Beginner- and intermediate-friendly rec-

reational packages start at around \$300 to \$500.

"Anything in that price range will be designed to do a little bit of everything, whether you're skiing at a Nordic touring center or making your own tracks," Neagle said. "And it allows you to go out your front door and have a little adventure."

Since the sport is endurance focused, attire is lighter than alpine outerwear: usually a sweat-wicking base and mid-layers and a breathable, wind-resistant jacket. Bottom options include thermals and

running tights, or fleece or soft-shell pants.

Questions? Call your nearby shop, which can help cus-

tomers select, size and maintain gear. Whether by phone, online or in person when it's safe, these businesses offer expert advice about local terrain and connection with the ski community. Ski associations are also resources for getting people outside, teaching skills and managing trails; American Cross Country Skiers has an online list of these groups.

This season, participants should avoid pre- and post-ski gatherings. Distancing and masks are important anywhere people might have closer contact, including warming huts that haven't already shuttered to reduce risk. Anderson advised that even outdoors, skiers should distance, maintain proper hygiene and exercise caution skiing for an extended time near anyone outside their household.

Wherever you adventure, be considerate of other people and private land, heed trail signs and follow Leave No Trace practices.

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# How to overcome workout boredom

## METRO CREATIVE

Even the most ardent fitness enthusiasts sometimes lack the motivation to exercise.

Boredom with a workout can sometimes be overcome by an especially effective workout. But for those instances when boredom is difficult to overcome, men and women who want to stay in shape can try these strategies.

■ **Join a sports league.** A workout doesn't have to be limited to the weight room or the cardiovascular area of your local gym. If your motivation to workout is waning, consider joining a competitive sports league. Many fitness facilities even offer adults sports leagues on their premises or at nearby parks for outdoor sports. Sports such as racquetball, soccer and boxing or mixed martial arts provide great exercise and opportunities to meet other fitness-minded people.

■ **Take along your tablet.** Many fitness facilities

now include WiFi internet access with the cost of a membership. People bored with their workouts can take advantage of this perk and take their tablets with them to the gym, watching a favorite television show or movie while burning calories during the cardiovascular portions of their workouts. This gives people bored with their fitness regimens something to look forward to, and the chance to catch up with a popular show might be all the motivation people need to get off the couch and exercise.

■ **Periodically change your regimen.** It's easy to get bored with a workout if you're always doing the same repetitive exercises. Speak with a personal trainer at your gym and ask for some advice on how to switch things up and still meet your fitness goals. There's more than one way to get fit, and periodically changing your exercise regimen can be a great way

to shake things up and reinvigorate your interest in exercise.

■ **Set new goals.** Boredom with a workout regimen sometimes creeps in because people have achieved their initial fit-

ness goals and haven't set new ones. Whether you have lost the amount of weight you set out to lose or can now squat as much as you set out to squat, set new goals so you have a new carrot dangling on the

end of your stick.

Nearly everyone encounters workout boredom at one point another. Various strategies can help you overcome such a malaise and reinvigorate your enthusiasm for exercising.

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METRO



# Mirroring healthy behaviors during the pandemic

Mayo Clinic News Network

Have you ever heard a lame joke but see everyone else is laughing so you find yourself giggling along? Or lean into a conversation when others were, as well? Or yawned following another person's yawn even though you don't feel sleepy?

These are examples of a common behavior called mirroring, where people mimic gestures of people they like. It happens all the time without people realizing it. This subconscious behavior is often referred to as the chameleon effect. Some examples include mirroring another's gestures, expressions, tone of voice or body position.

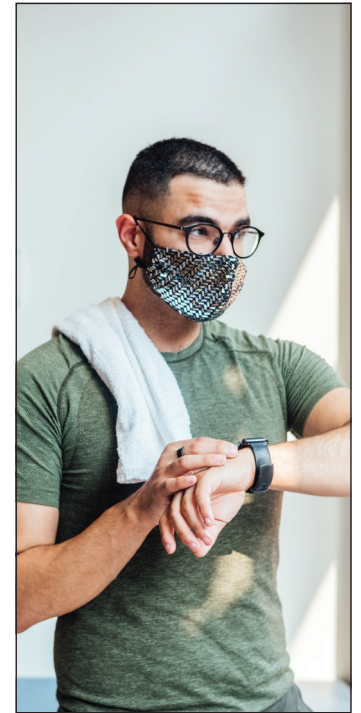
## CREATES CONNECTIONS, INFLUENCES ATTITUDES

Humans are social beings, and mirroring can create powerful connections with others, and cause others to like and trust you more. In these situations, imitation is a form of flattery and builds rapport with others.

In addition to mirroring gestures, people often mirror the attitudes they adopt and the decisions they make after important people in their lives. At a young age, people tend to adopt attitudes, gestures and behaviors from family members and close friends. As they age, the circle of influence is expanded to include other people of importance, such as teachers, faith leaders, sports figures, celebrities and politicians.

For example, you are more likely to buy a product that is used or promoted by a beloved sports figure or celebrity, or adjust your attitudes to mirror that of politician or another important figure in your life. Research has shown that people react more positively to celebrity advice and subconsciously adapt behaviors to become more like the celebrities they admire.

These attitudes and behaviors can affect more than just your bank account. They can affect your overall health.



**If you are the only person wearing a face mask at the gym, you are more likely to remove it.** Pexels

## COVID-19 BEHAVIORS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, infectious disease experts have asked people to adopt behaviors to slow the spread of the virus, such as wearing a mask, frequently washing hands, staying home and maintaining social distance from others. However, people's compliance with these recommendations is influenced by compliance of others nearby, on TV or online.

This harkens back to people's adolescent years and a desire to be part of the "in" crowd. People's brains are wired to mirror the behaviors they see so they fit in and find acceptance. Their attitudes toward COVID-19 and behaviors to prevent COVID-19 spread are no different.

For example, if you are the only person wearing a face mask at the gym or in a store, you are more likely to remove it. Likewise, you are more likely to have a positive attitude toward a specific behavior, like staying home for the holidays, if it is endorsed by a favorite celebrity or another important person in your life.

## TAKING ACTION

Much of these behaviors or attitude shifts occur subcon-

sciously, but there are things you can do to raise your personal awareness and react in a helpful way:

Research COVID-19 recommendations. Use trusted, verified sources of information, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.

Question your attitudes. It is helpful to take a step back to ask yourself why you feel the way you do about a specific topic. Would you continue to feel the same way if an influential person in your life had a different recommendation? What things would need to occur to change your attitude?

Surround yourself with positive influencers. Are your health, happiness and safety important to the people you allow to influence your life? If not, you may want to reevaluate their priority in your life. Also, examine the elements of your life that you allow to be affected by celebrities. It may be OK to emulate a celebrity by purchasing a perfume or shoes he or she endorses but not follow his or her advice on decisions that affect your health.

Make a plan for social situations. Before leaving the

house, make a plan for how you will behave in the situation. For example, you may decide that you will keep your mask on regardless of the situation you encounter. Practice phrases to use if you receive pressure to behave differently, such as: "I don't love wearing a mask, but I do it because it keeps me and you safe. That's my priority right now."

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged many daily routines and traditions. It al-

so presents an opportunity to critically evaluate how you are subconsciously influenced by others. During this time, talk with your health care provider if you have questions about slowing the spread of COVID-19 or other elements of your health and safety.

*This article is written by Judy Fruehbrodt Glenzinski, M.D., a Family Medicine physician at Mayo Clinic Health System in Faribault, Minn.*

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