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HOW (AND WHY) TO EXERCISE IN THE MOMENT

If you want to get the most out of your workouts, try not to daydream or let yourself be distracted. **Exercising consciously prevents the mistakes and poor form that lead to fatigue, injury and less-than-optimal results.** It also can aid you in breathing more deeply and holding in your abdominal muscles during everyday activities such as driving or brushing your teeth. "Focusing on your moves helps you tune in to your surroundings and the signals your body is sending," says Debbie Mandel, a personal trainer in New York City and author of *Turn On Your Inner Light: Fitness for Body, Mind and Soul* (Busy Bee Group, 2003). For some simple ways to be more "present" during workouts, turn the page. ➤

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conscious exercise

- **Visualize your movements.** Research shows that "seeing" the mind-muscle connection when you work out actually affects movements and improves results.
- **Exercise control.** Don't use momentum when you're weight training; keep the lifting and the lowering movements slow and controlled.
- **Change routines.** Varying the intensity of your workouts and changing them periodically will surprise your body and stimulate positive changes.
- **Listen to your body.** Learn to distinguish between the benefit of a "good burn" – taking an exercise to the point of fatigue – and pain that is a signal to stop and rest.

– Jennifer Matlack