

Things No One Ever Told Me...When I Was Overweight and Out of Shape



By Sara Borgstede

I Was the Fat Girl.

I grew up hating exercise. I was the kid picked last for the team in gym class. Overweight and out of shape, if it required sweating, you could count me out.



The truth is I secretly wanted to be part of the “in crowd” of the cute volleyball players who got to leave class early, boarding the busses to go to games and tournaments. I would have loved to fly across the track like the cross country runners.

But it was as if everyone else spoke a foreign language and no one bothered to teach me. My body didn’t do those things.

I believed I just wasn’t made to do physical activity.

Oh, at times I dabbled into the world of fitness, but it wasn’t a regular part of my life.

Other people were born with *the exercise love* gene, but not me.

A Whole New World

Fast forward into my late 30s, when after a lifetime of yo-yo weight gain and dieting, [I finally lost 100 pounds and learned to overcome my compulsive overeating and binge eating.](#)

Suddenly exercise was part of the deal.

I still hated exercise.

I still figured other people were born to exercise, but not me.

Still, exercise meant I got to eat more as I was slowly losing weight, and I did love to eat. (That's still true.)

Like it or not, it was time to jump into the fitness world.

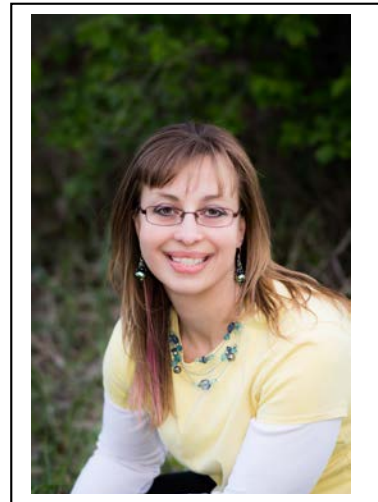
You know, to be one of those people.

People who go to the gym – in form fitting workout clothes.

People who run outside – even when it's cold.

People who lift weights.

People who sign up for races and set goals.



Things People Never Told Me

As I began to slowly move into the world of fitness and exercise, I learned little tips and tricks along the way. What workout gear I needed and what was a waste of money. What clothes to wear and which stores carried the items I needed --- in my sizes.

Now, I'm going to share this super-helpful information with you.

You don't need to stumble along trying out everything and learning the hard way. You have the insider information right at your fingertips.

Many of these tips are from me, some are from friends, and some are from Faithful Finish Lines members (www.faithfulfinishlines.com).

Read on for the insider scoop.

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FITNESS TIPS ~ FAST ACTION CHEAT SHEET



By Sara Borgstede

When you first start going to the gym, you might feel like everyone's watching you, but they aren't. They are focused on their own workout. If anything, they are impressed that you are there. I promise. –Sara

I never knew I could like it. – Chris, Faithful Finish Lines Member

I never knew I could do it. – Chris

I never knew there were other people just like me, as scared as me, doing it. The first time I went to the gym was the hardest. After that it got easier. – Chris

Workout clothes are fun! Another excuse to go shopping! But what looks good on someone else might not look good on me, and it's okay to stick to clothes you are comfortable in. Try not to feel hurt if you have to go up a couple sizes. – Chris

Sports bras with the cross (x) type are impossible to get off by yourself. If you live alone, buy the plain Jane type or the type that unhook in the front. –Chris

Don't overthink it. Just do it. There's no one perfect, right time, perfect outfit, perfect weather conditions or calendar schedule. It's not as hard as you make it out in your head sometimes. – Julie, FFL member

Decide that this is a lifestyle change, not a diet/exercise event. This is not something you do to lose weight and then get back to your life. This IS your new life. – Julie

Gyms are not the only answer to losing weight. If you've had 3 canceled gym memberships, maybe you need to find a different way to exercise that is more in tune with you personally. – Julie

Think, "I need to get some exercise in" even when exhausted. 98% of the time, my body thanks me for getting up even amid exhaustion. Self-talk is what keeps you hanging in there. –Stacy

I'm not the person I was in my 20s. I was a runner in high school and college. Then one day I woke up in my 40s and I'm 60 lbs overweight. My cholesterol is borderline over the limit. I get back to running. It took me WEEKS to realize that I truly needed to walk before I could run. It was a very humbling moment. I am back to running 3-5 miles and down 16 lbs. But, as long as the cholesterol is coming down, that is all I care about. – Meg

Classes can be fun. –Cathy, Faithful Finish Lines Member

No one is judging you. They are too busy worrying about themselves, or they are motivated by you. Personally I am much more motivated by someone who obviously needs to work out giving it effort than by a slim trim athlete. I have had to learn to realize that for those slim trim people, exercise is the reason they are that way, and it hasn't always been as easy for them as it is now. –Cathy

You just have to do it. It is like taking medicine. Hopefully you will eventually enjoy it, but if not, do it anyway. – Cathy

Get a few workout buddies. It's SO much less intimidating to try a new class or activity with a friend. --Tara

Capri length workout pants work well for me. Shorts tend to ride up and cause chaffing issues, and regular pants are too long (I'm short.). Capris are just right. –Sara

One place not to skimp is BUY GOOD SHOES. This is going to cost you some money. Go to a running shoe store to get fitted for proper running or walking shoes. Plan to spend around \$100. I know it's an investment, but it's worth it. [Here is a link to how to buy the right shoes for you.](#) –Sara

Watch fun TV shows at home (or hotel room while traveling) while you are on the elliptical or treadmill. –Heather, Faithful Finish Lines Member

When you are starting out, try new things to mix it up and see what you like. Walk, bike, run, take a class at the YMCA or gym or yoga studio. And keep trying new things. You are bound to find something you enjoy a little bit. –Heather

Most everyone is so worried about themselves they have no idea what you are doing, wearing, or that you are anything but a warm body in close proximity to them and likely to make them uncomfortable since they are just as insecure. –Heather

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Preparation. I think this is even more important for big folks. We HAVE to plan ahead for food stuff because if not, bad choices will happen once and then twice and then you are canceling out all of your exercise. That's been the best part for me – backing my exercise up with good nutrition. –Tara

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Whether you need help being held accountable or you don't know how to use a machine or right form at the gym, reach out and ask for help. It's hard to do everything alone. People are always willing to help you on your journey. –Kelly

Do not compare your journey to anyone else's. Don't let that jealous monster in your head trick you into thinking your success isn't as good as the person next to you. Your success is success. –Nicole

Find an accountability buddy – someone who will stick with you, encourage you, help you with your goals, and push you! –Nicole

Celebrate success! If you reach a goal, a milestone. Celebrate, do it smart, don't derail yourself. It's okay to be proud of a PR (personal record) or a weight or size goal. You did it and you deserve it! –Nicole

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SHOPPING GUIDE



By Sara Borgstede

Try workout pants that have some shapewear built in. I like these [Tek Shapewear pants from Kohls](#). They hold everything in so it's not too jiggly! I like pants with some tummy control and form fitting around the thighs for support. If you feel nervous in tighter pants, wear a pair of shorts over the top. –Sara

Champion sports bras saved me. Before this I had to wear two. Now I have not gone to any other. Link: [Champion Sports Bras](#) --Stacy

These long workout/running shorts I found are by BCG. The shirts in this brand don't fit me correctly, but the long shorts with the inside tie at the waist are perfect for wearing shorts without baring cellulose. Link: [Academy Sports, BCG Women's Shorts](#) –Chris



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Really comfy headbands that keep the sweat out of my eyes and fly away pinned down. I found a few cute Goody ones at Target last week. They're like workout shirt material but don't ride or fall down. Link: [Target Scunci headbands](#) –Tara



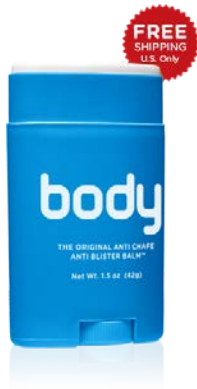
The right pants. Get pants that are the right cut/fit for your size. I bought a few pairs from Lane Bryant to get me through until I can wear my others and OMGODNESS. They fit PERFECTLY. They don't bunch. They don't fall down. They are SO comfy. The first boxing class I could hardly concentrate because of my pants...then I got these in the mail and my life changed. I feel great in them too. [Link to Lane Bryant active pants.](#)

I like Walmart tights (Link: [Danskin workout tights from Walmart](#) and [Avia workout tights from Walmart](#)) and tank tops. –Cathy

I like Target for workout clothes. While regular Target clothing doesn't fit me that well, I love their workout clothing and it does fit. [Link to Target workout clothes I like.](#) –Sara

Bodyglide! This stuff is fantastic if you have any chaffing issues. Athletes of all types swear by it. Use it under arms, between legs, under the breast area, even on your feet if your feet rub and cause blisters. Great stuff, totally

worth the cost. Do NOT attempt to use Vaseline. Link: [Bodyglide](#) –Sara



Blister Block is a similar product that comes in stick form. [Link for Blister Block](#). --Nicole

Danskin bike shorts were a great starting place for me. I wore mine for years and still wear them to spin class. I like long bike shorts. (I have loose skin on my inner thighs and this keeps it all held in so it doesn't catch on my bike seat when I get on and off. Truth.) Note: Do not wear underwear with bike shorts. Once you graduate to longer rides – over 10-15 miles, you will want to invest in higher quality bike shorts with padding. Once you get to that point in your workouts, ask me for a recommendation. (I love cycling!) [Link to Danskin bike shorts](#). --Sara