

Time to stop talking & just do it!

by *Sandra J. Hartley, MPE, EdD*

Be honest. We all talk ourselves in and out of things. This “self-talk” is part of our psyche’s motivation system. But when it comes to getting more physically active, it may be best to stop listening to your inner voice and “just do it.”

Research on the self-talk of older women found that unmotivated people self-talk a lot, and talk themselves into doing nothing. They say things like:

“I am too old to be more active.”

“I am too weak to lift weights.”

“I am too unsteady to do balance exercises.”

Not so! Active older women give this advice: try some different things and find out what you want to do. Then get on with it. Don’t think about it lest you talk yourself out of it!

You are never too old to benefit from simple home exercises or a refreshing walk. If your muscles are wimpy, some 1-2 pound weights could change your abilities enormously! If you are getting stiff or unsteady, then you will be amazed what can do in even one session of moving your body.

Some inactive older women say they can’t afford the classes or equipment. But staying active reduces the costs of health care in the long run and keeps you independent.

Some women feel strange about building their muscles. But from age 30-80, we women lose about 50% of our muscle strength! It’s worth the effort to keep building those muscles as we age.

Stop listening to the negative self-talk and start acting on your positive ideas about doing something active, interesting and fun. For instance, if you’re thinking, “I wonder if my neighbour would go for a walk tonight?” -- don’t wonder anymore. Grab your jacket and knock on her door. And don’t listen to her excuses either!



About the Author

Sandra J. Hartley is Professor Emeritus, Researcher in Exercise Motivation and Gerontology, University of Alberta, and Life member of Active Aging Canada.