

Executive Challenge #2:

“I Just Can’t Seem To Find Time To Exercise.”

What are the biggest challenges facing successful business people today? In my work as a certified executive coach for C-Suite Executives, Directors, Managers, and Entrepreneurs, there are many recurring themes that seem to surface. One at a time, I’ll be sharing with you 12 of those top challenges along with hints, tips, and steps you can take to avoid or eliminate altogether these key issues that might be holding you back from achieving the kind of success you are aiming for.

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On the wheel of balance, this is one of the areas that busy executives and entrepreneurs seem to neglect the most. The truth is that if you aren’t physically fit, you aren’t “fit” at work either. Without regular exercise, your health can be compromised, leaving you less alert and less energetic in both work and play. And let’s face it: If you aren’t taking care of yourself, you won’t do anyone any good – not your business, your staff, your spouse, or your children.

Most of the people I work with genuinely *want* to be healthy, but making the changes necessary to get there seems daunting to them. I hear often, “I know I should exercise, but there’s no way I can make it to the gym every day.” Or, “There’s simply no room in my schedule for a full hour of exercise.” Well, here’s the good news: when it comes to exercise, a little goes a long way, and you don’t have to commit to becoming a Schwarzenegger-esque muscle builder to be reasonably fit.

If you don’t have an hour a day, seven days a week to exercise, that’s fine. How about 15 minutes *three* times a week? Whatever exercise you can add to your schedule will help. In fact, consider this: In a study conducted by the University of Virginia, USA, both men and women completed fifteen 10-minute exercise routines each week for just three weeks. After only 21 days, the study participants increased their aerobic fitness to being equal to people 10-15 years younger. And, in strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility, they were equal to people 20 years younger! John Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland, USA studied inactive adults and found that short workouts were just as effective as longer ones. So, remember: Exercise is not an “all or nothing” proposition. You don’t have to schedule in hours and hours of working out per week in order to make a big difference in your health.

Make It Habitual

Fitting exercise into your schedule isn’t about replacing an old habit. It’s simply a matter of adopting a *new* habit that works within your lifestyle and that can help you reach small goals.

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Where do you begin? Just like achieving greater balance in your life, start small. You will find the new habit much less daunting if you don’t require too much of yourself in the beginning. As you experience success, you can add more small steps to your overall goal. Once you begin to see the great results you’ve gotten from just a little bit of effort, you’ll be surprised to find new and unexpected ways to increase exercise over time.

Get out your calendar right now, and block out 15 minutes for exercise – starting tomorrow. Set those 15 minutes aside, and guard them fiercely. Block out another 15 minutes in two days and yet another 15 minutes two days beyond that.

As you can, and whenever you’re ready, add another day and another day until you’re exercising 15 minutes every single day. As you begin to enjoy your routine, add more time each day if you’d like. Slowly inch your way up until the habit becomes very natural. But remember: If you can’t find the time, *you don’t have to exercise an hour every day!* It really isn’t necessary in order to improve your overall fitness level.

Here are some more easy ways you can exercise daily - even while you’re traveling:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk all or part of the way to the office.
- Take a 15-minute walk during lunch.
- Use a pedometer to gauge how many steps you take each day, and try to increase that number every day.
- Do jumping jacks for 5-10 minutes in your office, at home, or in your hotel room. (A 150-pound person can burn 90 calories in one 10-minute session of jumping jacks.)
- At home, as you watch TV, do some arm exercises with small hand weights.

Find an exercise buddy. It helps to have someone else to be accountable to for reaching your goals, whether it’s your spouse, a work colleague, or a personal trainer.

Whatever you do, don’t do a form of exercise that you don’t like. You’ll never be able to keep up the habit. Make your exercise time fun by trying different types of exercise until you find something you enjoy. By doing so, you’ll be much more likely to stick with it.

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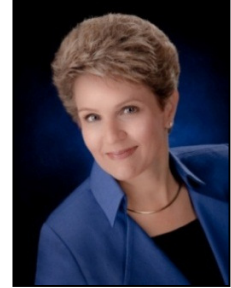
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BRENDA BENCE

**BUILDING SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP BRANDS
FOR COMPANIES AND EXECUTIVES**

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Brenda S. Bence is an internationally-recognized branding expert, Certified Executive Coach, dynamic trainer and Certified Speaking Professional, and the author of several award-winning books, including the *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo* personal branding series and *Smarter Branding Without Breaking the Bank*.



With an MBA from Harvard Business School, Brenda’s career has spanned more than two decades and has included developing mega brands for Procter & Gamble and Bristol-Myers Squibb across four continents and 50 countries.

Now, as President of Brand Development Associates (BDA) International, she travels the world speaking, training, and coaching individuals and companies to greater success through creative, yet practical, corporate and personal brand development. Brenda’s client list includes companies such as Citibank, Microsoft, Deutsche Bank, Credit Suisse, Deloitte, Hershey’s, KFC, Kraft, Johnson & Johnson, Mattel, and Sheraton Hotels.

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