

# Pushing Beyond Your Comfort Zone

You have all heard of this thing called the comfort zone. During exercise, it is when you are moving, your heart rate is elevated slightly and your muscles are working, but you can still breathe easy and you're comfortable. A steady paced walk is a perfect comfort zone workout. Now you have also heard about pushing outside your comfort zones. This is where the true magic begins. And it is true. To improve your fitness, to improve your strength, to reach your health and fitness goals, you do indeed need to work beyond your comfort zone. Not so far beyond them that you decide to climb a cliff face with no harness. But slightly beyond the point of comfort.

There is the obvious physical side. If you are strength training, lift a little heavier, or do a few more reps. Feel the muscles burning before you stop. And I mean can't do too many more reps burning. This is the discomfort you will feel when you are pushing past your comfort zone. Cardio, when you feel like you cannot go any further, whether you are running, swimming, cycling or doing a HIIT class, push for just a little bit longer. 1 minute further than when you think that is all you have left in your tank. Do this EVERY time and before you know it, your comfort zone has expanded by a full 10 minutes because you are now fitter than before.

Then there is the mental side. This is actually the much harder side. Our brain tells us to stop when we are uncomfortable. But your body is capable of much more than the brain thinks. So you need to motivate the mind to keep going, to push past the comfort of our comfort zone bubble, and to make the improvements we want. To do this you need to find a motivator. Something that motivates you to keep going. For some, it is as easy as listen to a good song, with a good beat, to get them through their workouts. Others may be motivated by a little competition, so working out with a friend is their motivator. Goal setting is often a great motivator. Why are you exercising in the first place? Because you want to stay fit and healthy and be able to run around and keep up with the kids? Because you want to lose weight for your overall long term health? Because you want to gain strength to prevent injury later in life? Goals are fantastic motivators, as long as you constantly remind yourself of what they are. Use all of these motivators to push through your comfort zone, when things begin to get a little too comfy.

One thing to remember with all of this. Pain is not discomfort. Meaning, there are times you should stop and not push through. If you are in pain, joint pain, headache etc, stop. Discomfort is a burning sensation, anything sharp is usually pain and you should stop and pull it back to where you are comfortable. If your muscles are burning, your heart is pounding and you are breathing heavy, but no actual pain is felt, then your body has just a little bit more in the tank, this is when you push!

"If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you." Remember this 😊