



Self-Talk

Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your instructions. (Psalm 119:29 NLT)

My husband and I moved onto a sailboat fulltime in 2018. Shortly afterwards, we realized that enjoying our new status as liveaboards made staying fit a non-negotiable.

Everything about everyday life is different from living in a house. For instance, on laundry day, I carry a fabric hamper on my back to the laundromat located a city block from our vessel. Then I walk that distance three or four times, depending on how many loads I wash and how many machines are available.

Bringing groceries home means carrying sacks down a sloped ramp and along a wooden dock. Walking that dock requires caution and balance, especially when it's wet or icy.

Our bed is v-shaped, and the berth's design makes climbing into bed look like a gymnastic feat.

From necessity, we've resolved to go to a local gym at 5 a.m. several mornings each week. At times—especially on dark, rainy mornings—I catch myself entertaining thoughts like, *Stay in bed where it's warm and dry. Skipping today won't matter.*

A different thought recurs once I'm fully engaged in exercise and my muscles are begging for mercy: *This is so hard. I can't do this anymore.*

Listening to negative self-talk sabotages my fitness goals, so I've learned to practice self-talk of a different nature: "Get up. Begin the morning with a workout, and you'll feel good all day." "Keep going! You're strong, and you can do this."

Our thoughts influence our behaviors which, in turn, determine our destiny. Speaking lies undoes our resolve to pursue better health, but speaking truth reinforces it. Let's be careful, then, to practice self-talk rooted in truth.

Here are three fitness-related truths we can speak to ourselves:

- Exercise is worth the effort. I will feel better, I will become more flexible, and I will be stronger.
- I choose to love my body and treat it well so it can serve me and others well.
- My body is a gift. Mobility is a gift. Health is a gift. I choose to be a wise steward of these gifts.

Question: Does your fitness-related self-talk promote your goals? If not, what needs to change?

