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## Balancing Work & Life: Finding Time For Fitness

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By Colleen DeBaise



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**WHEN DANIEL FEUER** quit his day job in 2005 to start his own business, one thing immediately fell to the wayside: his normal fitness routine.

As he hunkered down to launch UJeans, a design-your-own-jeans company, gone went the early-morning weight-training workouts. Finding time for fitness had always been a challenge, but being a business owner added "a new layer to the mix," says Feuer, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. "You want to focus more on the business and bring in more money, because you have bills to pay."

Indeed, many entrepreneurs say it's hard to justify exercising when they could be selling, marketing or otherwise growing the business. And fitness, which for many feels like a chore, is easy to cross off the to-do list. Even though numerous studies show exercise reduces stress, stimulates creativity and improves self-esteem, "it's one of those things that seems to be kind of indispensable when you're looking at a crazy calendar," says Tina Johnson, editor-in-chief of Women's Health magazine in New York. "Like so many things in life, it's just deciding that you've got to make this a priority."

Stacy Denney, founder of maternity spa Barefoot & Pregnant in Sausalito, Calif., believes she's come up with the perfect way to get work done without skimping on fitness: the "workout meeting." She'll often go for a jog with a fitness-minded banker on her advisory board, brainstorming about the business during the four-mile loop. "Because of the adrenaline and the endorphins, you end up coming up with some really great ideas," says Denney, who also runs or bikes with a marketing associate. Usually, the workout meetings end at a coffee shop, where Denney and her exercise partner can put ideas to paper.

Other business owners say they resort to extreme measures (at least, financially) to assure they get their exercise. Yanik Silver, founder of online publishing company SurefireMarketing.com in Potomac, Md., knew he needed to make exercise a priority when he looked at a photo from a beach-ball tournament and thought, "wow, I look kind of chubby." He'd tried to stick to a routine since his business started in 2000, but "work-related stuff would pop up."

This time, however, Silver decided to pay a personal trainer about \$5,000 (roughly, four times the trainer's normal rate) for six weeks' worth of weight and cardio-training. "If it's a big chunk of money you might think three or four times before skipping an appointment," says Silver, who dropped almost 10 pounds after meeting with the trainer several times a week during that period. "I don't know if it would work for everyone, but it worked for me."

Many fitness-seeking entrepreneurs say they schedule workout time on their calendars, much like an important business meeting they can't miss. Others take it a step further, bringing exercise routines into the office, and sometimes inviting employees to join. On Tuesday mornings at 8 a.m. at North Star Marketing in North Kingstown, R.I., founder April Williams and several of her staff convene in a big conference room for an hour-long workout with Williams's longtime trainer, Nate Cote. "It's been amazing for us," says Williams, who picks up Cote's \$150-a-week tab and supplies her staff with equipment like free weights, yoga balls, floor mats and rubber bands. While the workouts are optional (about half of her 10-member staff take part), "we treat this as a benefit," she says.



### Conference room push-ups:

At North Star Marketing, owner April Williams (doing crunches in foreground) works out with her staff.

Williams decided to create the in-office training sessions (the group works out again, without Cote, on Thursday mornings) because employees would frequently complain that they wanted to get fit but didn't have time to work out. As an added bonus, the sessions help with team-

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building and boost employee loyalty, she says.

Johnson, of Women's Health magazine, says employee workout sessions "certainly add to the camaraderie in the office." For owners who want private workouts, though, she recommends picking a gym close to the business, and going at off-hours "when it's not so crowded, to make it more appealing."

Some business owners say the ability to set their own hours gives them more flexibility to find time to work out. And Gini Dietrich, founder of public-relations firm Arment Dietrich in Chicago, says being the boss means you can demand whatever is needed to get those workouts in. Dietrich, who loves to ride her bike to work, recently changed offices. "The broker kept showing me space that was great, but I'd say, 'There are two things I need — I need to be able to bring my bike into the office, so I don't have to lock it up outside, and then two, I need to have a shower at work,'" she says.

Dietrich's new office in downtown Chicago has both, so she happily bikes to and from work (a total of 30 miles) almost every day. That's the "perk of being an owner," she says. "What I want, we do."

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