



the perfect partner

Finding the motivation to work a little hard to come by?

Well, do as

Damien Kelly

suggests and bring a friend along for the ride.

partner medicine ball sit-ups

■ Sit opposite each other, knees bent at 90 degrees. One of you holds the medicine ball while the other crosses their arms on their chest. Your toes are a couple of centimetres from your partner's. Brace your abs. Slowly lean backwards. Touch your lower back lightly on the ground, then rise smoothly. Once you've reached the top, carefully throw or pass the ball, and repeat the whole exercise. Your technique's the same, whether you're holding the ball or not.

■ why you'll love it

Abs exercises are so damned hard. Variety and new techniques trick you into thinking you're having fun.

How do I get more motivation to exercise? That's the six million dollar health and fitness question we'd all like answered. For all of us, motivation generally rises and falls throughout the year. Just before summer, our motivation seems to miraculously re-appear, ditto for the bridal party six months before a wedding. But how can we conjure up motivation all the time?

Well, research is pointing towards social support. This means you train more often and skip fewer sessions. John Cooksey, Sports and Performance Psychologist, Sportswise Sydney endorses training with a partner. "It increases motivation and helps in the setting of goals."

You're more likely to warm-up, stretch and hydrate when you're training with someone else. "Together you'll set more realistic goals, celebrate them more wholeheartedly and you'll feed off each other along the way," says Cooksey.

Anna Wilson, 30, a lawyer from Balmain in Sydney, says training with her fiancé has added a whole new dimension to her workouts. "When we started training together we agreed on common goals and realised that we would no longer be letting only ourselves down by missing a session. Now, when we pre-arrange an early morning session, it's harder to not go".

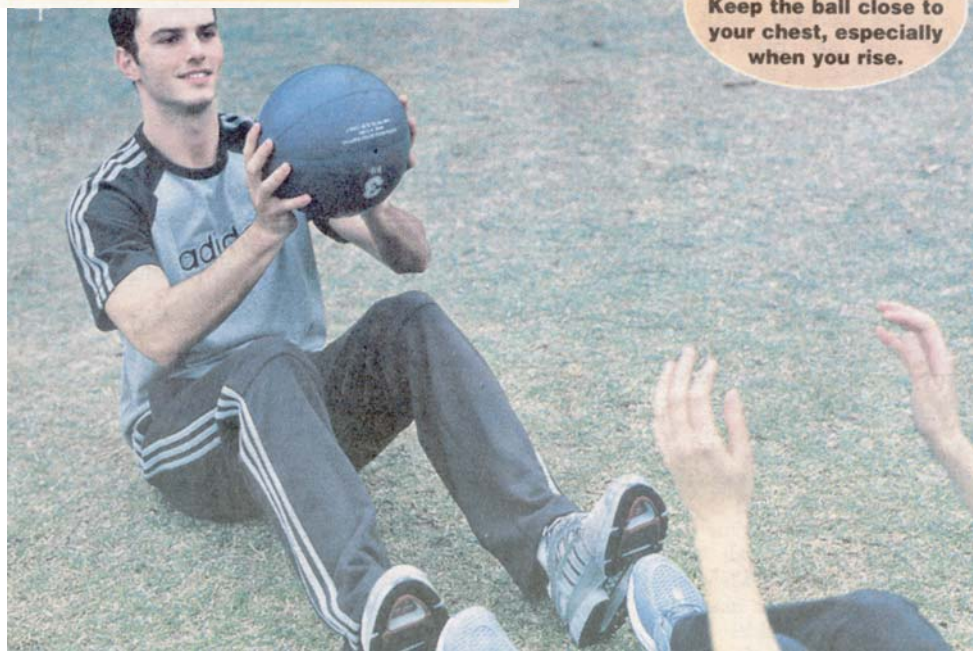
Leonie Bendeich, 47, a vocational trainer from Engadine in Sydney's south, trains three times a week with her daughter by taking her to exercise classes. "We go to group classes together and both love the variety and music. Having her there gives me the extra encouragement I need on those cold winter mornings or when I'm tired. We make a good team."

So grab a training buddy and use our exercises to get your training partnership underway.

what if i like

training by myself?

Many runners, cyclists and swimmers love being on their own and, if it works for you, great. But that doesn't mean you can or should entirely do without support. Indirect support, particularly by a partner, is beneficial. Let those close to you know what you're doing and ask for their help. Trade off chores or child-minding to get the time you need. You don't need to be an elite athlete to feel the benefits of a support team.



tip

No jerky movements. Keep the ball close to your chest, especially when you rise.

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tip

Keep hands relaxed inside your gloves. This also relaxes the upper body so you'll be able to box for longer.

boxing

■ To start, you both need boxing classes. Then you and your partner can design your own workout by getting creative with combinations of punches. Swap between being the boxer and the pad person. Your goal is to incorporate boxing into a circuit, such as 50 straight punches, 12 squats, 50 upper cuts, 10 push-ups, 10 left lunges, 50 hooks, 10 right lunges, then a run around the park.

■ **why you'll love it** Boxing is a form of exercise that does so many good things in one. It helps you lose weight, de-stress, and build fitness, upper body tone and strength.

Photographs: Jodie Burns. Models dressed by adidas, call 1800 801 891. Sussan wears Logo strappy singlet, \$40, Scripted T-shirt, \$45 & Dance pant, \$70. Richard wears 3 stripe Premium raglan t-shirt, \$50 & College pant, \$80. Both wear adidas Climacool 3 shoes, \$220.

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tip

People run faster when they're passing to a partner, and get better results.



running for fun

■ You and your partner run round the local oval passing the frisbee, soccer ball, football or any other toy you can think of back and forth. Don't just get stuck on one. Try them all and change regularly.

■ **why you'll love it** Surprisingly, not everyone loves jogging or running! With this, your skills at a number of fun activities will improve and focusing on the object helps you forget you're running.

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tip
Maintain constant,
even pressure
against each other
and the ball.

partner swiss ball squats

- Stand back-to-back with the Swiss ball between your lower backs. Lean back until the ball feels firmly wedged into your lower backs and, maintaining the pressure, simultaneously take two small steps forward into position.
- This exercise works best if one partner directs. "Down ... pause ... rise," helps you stay in sync (and on your feet!). Lower until your thighs are parallel to the ground. Your knees stay behind the line of your toes. Look straight ahead.

why you'll love it Squats have a bad – but undeserved – reputation for making thighs bigger. That may happen if you regularly do squats lifting weights. This version adds a challenge but not the weight.

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