

By Lacy Wolff, ERS Health Promotion Administrator



This month I had the privilege of recording a podcast with one of the world’s leading exercise and obesity researchers, Dr. Tim Church. The [ERS Walk & Talk Podcast](#) is a health and wellness podcast recorded during a short walk with a variety of mentors, friends, and experts. In my conversation with Dr. Church, he discussed what he’s learned over 30 years in the field of obesity research and how important our mindset is around physical activity.

Our talk, and his suggestions got me thinking about how often it is our own self-limiting beliefs that keep us from moving. Despite my own education and knowledge of all of the benefits of physical activity, I also have days when I still don’t feel like I have time or want to take the time to get my daily movement. We all can feel this way sometimes.

Most people will have days where there’s more to do than we have time for and we think that our daily movement break is less important than our work or family obligations. As much as we know we “should” we can find ourselves sitting (or standing) behind our desks for hours on end trying to complete our daily tasks. When the workday ends, we move into the next phase of the day, which can include cooking dinner, taking kids to their extracurricular activities, taking care of household chores, or watching our favorite shows on TV.

A lot of our decisions around physical activity are due to our past experiences-positive or negative-which can create mindsets, or a set of beliefs that do not support our health.

When it comes to physical activity, all-or-nothing thinking is very common. An example of this type of thinking is, *if I can’t get out for 30 minutes of cardio, or get to the gym for a class, or lift weights it doesn’t “count.”* Or, maybe you have used the old, *“I’ll start on Monday”* statement with the hope that you will be a different person with new motivation on Monday.

Below are some of the most common barriers and subconscious beliefs about physical activity that I’ve heard (and thought myself) in my more than 20 years in the fitness industry and some “mind-shift” statements you may want to consider if you want to increase your own physical activity this month.

Mindset, Belief, Thought	Mind-shift statement
Just a few minutes won’t make a difference.	Everything I do for my health matters, even two minutes!
I don’t feel like it.	I will fit in a 5-10 minute walk (or other low-intensity activity) and will re-assess when I’m finished. (On days like this, consider calling a friend or listening to a book or podcast that you enjoy as a motivator.)
I don’t have time.	I know that when I am active I am in a better mood and am more productive. I will make the time!
I have to be in pain to make it “count.”	I am going to move in a way that feels good for my mind and body today.
I don’t know what to do.	I am not going to make this complicated. I know how to walk. I’ll start there!
I don’t have equipment and can’t afford a gym membership.	I don’t need any fancy equipment to move. I can put on a pair of shoes and go out for a walk anytime.

If you are interested in increasing your physical activity, I hope you will listen to the full conversation I had with Dr. Church through the [ERS Walk & Talk Podcast](#) or join us for one of our weekly webinars. Our webinar community provides advice, encouragement, and connection for anyone interested in improving health and well-being. And, if you have questions you would like to ask directly Dr. Church, he will also be our featured guest on our July 15th Exercise as Medicine: Q&A with Dr. Tim Church You can register for this and all of our wellness events through the [ERS Wellness Events Calendar](#).