

Couples Who Sweat Together Stay Together

Last night, our gym CrossFit 925 hosted a date night for couples. I cooked up a fun, challenging, total-body workout (of which I will share an at-home version at the end of this post!), and then Big'z, a nearby burger joint, cooked up dinner for us to enjoy as a fitness family.

Sure, it may not have been the most romantic date night ever (no red roses were given, serenades sung, or candles lit), but it wasn't without its love-enhancing benefits!

A growing body of evidence suggests that couples who sweat together really do stay together! Check out a few of these facts:

Working out with your significant other can increase your happiness with your relationship.

Lab studies show that after jointly participating in an exciting physical challenge or activity, couples report feeling more satisfied with their relationships and more in love with their partner. What better way to reap these positive effects than by working out?

It's the physiological arousal (as opposed to the novelty or challenge of the activity) that nurtures romantic attraction. This suggests that sharing a fitness goal, such as training for a half marathon, taking swing dance lessons, or having a date night at the CrossFit gym down the road can boost the quality of your romantic relationship.

In other words, exercising with your partner can improve the efficiency of your workouts.

There's a concept in social psychology that holds that the

mere presence of someone else affects your ability to do an activity. Even if you have already perfected pull-ups or can leap over hurdles in your sleep, bringing your significant other to the gym with you could be a wonderful way to boost your energy output. Having your partner there will improve your strength and speed without you even being aware of it! However, if you're brand new to a particular mode of exercise, it may be best to do it solo until you achieve a more intermediate level. Otherwise, your partner's presence may distract you during a challenging task. Take a little time to get comfortable and confident with your activity of choice, then bring your partner along for that performance boost.

Getting fit with your romantic flame can help you achieve your goals.

When you and your partner care about one another's fitness, it becomes easier to reach your goals. A recent study of heterosexual couples showed that average-weight husbands who care about fitness engage in more physical activity when their wives offer more supportive health-related comments. Celebrating one another's victories, be it breaking a personal record for push-ups or giving up diet soda, as well as picking each other up when they stumble or feel discouraged, can provide the perfect context for such uplifting conversation.

Fitness can be a personal habit of yours, or it can be an invaluable asset, an irreplaceable ally, to your most important relationship. Why not share fitness with the one you love most, either daily, or occasionally? I believe you'll be blessed as you discover that pursuing health and regular physical challenges truly can deliver a refreshing new dimension to your relationship.

And now, as promised, here's a variation of the workout we conducted at our gym last night. All it requires is a medicine ball, a pair of light kettlebells, and of course, your

partner! Before you begin, make sure you warm up for at least 10 minutes, getting your entire body warm, loose and limber for the ensuing total-body routine!

Complete the following circuit as many times as possible in 20 minutes:

- 30 alternating Russian kettlebell swings (Partner 1 completes one repetition, immediately followed by Partner 2)
- 30-second side plank, right side
- 30-second side plank, left side
- 30 partner Russian twists with medicine ball (15 each direction)
- 30 alternating goblet squats (Partner 1 completes one repetition, immediately followed by Partner 2)

Exercise Instructions

Alternating Russian Kettlebell Swings

- Hold a kettlebell (start with a light one until you're comfortable with the movement) with both hands in front of you. Stand in a squat position with feet shoulder-width apart, toes angled out slightly.
- Lean over slightly at your waist and bend your knees as if to do a partial squat. Keep your lower back tight and arched, and keep head facing forward. Do not look down.
- Swing the kettlebell up to eye-level with an explosive hip thrust.
- Reverse the motion to return the kettlebell to the starting position between your legs, and immediately begin the next swing.

Side Plank

- Lie on your left side with your knees straight.
- Prop your upper body up on your left elbow and forearm.
- Brace your core by contracting your abs forcefully as if

you were about to be punched in the stomach.

- Raise your hips until your body forms a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders.

Partner Russian Twists

- Sit on the floor beside your partner with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. Hold the medicine ball at your chest.
- Lean back so your torso is at a 45-degree angle to floor, making sure to keep the spine straight and not rounded.
- Raise your core and slowly rotate round to the right as far as you can, bringing the ball to your hip. Pause then reverse this movement, and pass the ball to your partner.
- Complete 15 repetitions, then switch directions to finish the last 15.

Alternating Goblet Squats

- Hold a kettlebell by its horns at your chest. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, torso upright.
- With the kettlebell against your chest, squat down with the goal of having your elbows slide down along the inside of your knees. It's OK to have the elbows push the knees out a bit as you descend. Focus on keeping your back flat.
- Rise out of the squat by driving through your heels.

Stay fit, stay faithful.

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness*, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*, and her latest book, *Immeasurable: Diving into the Depths of God's Love*. Her popular website can be found at www.dianataylor.com and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925. Diana can be reached on Twitter.

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