

Ep #34: How to Release Your Inner Athlete



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Diana Murphy

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Welcome to *Weight Loss for CEOs*. A podcast that teaches executives and leaders how to deal with the unique challenges of achieving sustainable weight loss while balancing the responsibility of a growing company, family, and their own health. Here's your host, executive coach, Diana Murphy.

Good morning and happy Memorial Day. I'm thrilled to bring you a little deeper dive today about exercise. I wanted to go a little deeper after the interview last week that I had with Jill Angie. Don't miss that podcast, Jill is a fellow coach and has taught me so much. If you want to know more about running at any size, any fitness level, just check out last week's podcast.

Alright, so this week, I'm going to go a little deeper into fitness and discussing not really the why you should do it, why you should work out or move your body more, but I'm going to share the how, how to get out of your head and what you should be doing, to moving into creating a powerful plan that helps you to become the athlete – yes, I said athlete – that your body is craving to become.

It's possible for each one of us, and you know why I know that's true? Because it has happened to me. Now, maybe you look at it a little differently. Maybe it's becoming that yogi, you've always craved doing more, going deeper in that practice, or becoming an outdoor enthusiast.

Whatever your natural leaning is, I want to help you to lean into that and this podcast is not only for the person that just can't stay consistent, it's for the person that has not gotten started yet, and it's also for the person that might be burning out a little bit because they're working out all the time. So, this podcast is really designed for all levels, but takes a very different approach around exercise.

My fitness journey still surprises me to this day. In the beginning, I did not set out to work out in the way that I have in the end. It wasn't like a goal for me. But oh, am I thrilled about what my body is able to do? Hey, at my age, my body doesn't look too bad either; a little wrinkly lately. But I just got started and I created something I just didn't even expect. If I did it, you can do it.

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I will remind you that every thought around exercise creates a result. Oh boy, did it prove to be true in my life? So, during this podcast, you will glean the most results from it if you stay open and aware of your thoughts around exercise as I share mine, and some of the obstacles, that are thoughts, by the way, that often get in our way.

You know, often, I refer to obstacles as obstacle thoughts because it gives me more power over them, so I want you to think about it in that way as well. And looking back, I realize that the reason I got moving and went from that girl that thought exercising was only to help you to lose weight – yep, I only worked out consistently when I was in a weight loss diet mode – and I transformed into this girl who is a consistent exerciser with weights, spin, and functional classes.

This came from a progression of thinking differently about exercise, and more importantly about myself. It's a process. Give yourself some space to just get started. You'll be so glad you did. Oh, and your body will be too. And again, I'm speaking to over-exercisers and those that are couch potatoes. This is for everyone.

This is all about getting healthy, but not only in your body, but in your mind. When we move our bodies more, and it can be the mildest form of exercise, just moving, a lot falls into place for you. We process and get rid of stress, we're able to sense our body's fuel needs much more clearly, and we sleep better and generally feel better.

My fitness routine totally supports my mental health. I see it every time I step back from my regular routine. I'm going to share my story today to give you perspective, but what I'm going to be really clear about is how to get into yours and see what obstacles might be getting in your way. I'll share the steps I believe that can powerfully transform your fitness level as well as the classic thinking that I hear and have thought myself that gets in the way.

There are four key steps in releasing your inner athlete. I'm creating a fitness routine or lifestyle that works for you and is one that you can

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maintain; one where you're consistent whether you're traveling, whether you have a steady work schedule at home, whether you're working long, long hours, it is consistent.

First, you must start slow, take small steps and build. Two, engage in activities you want to do. Three, get in a better rhythm, honoring your body's feedback. And four, plan and decide ahead of time. In the show notes, which I highly encourage you to take advantage of, you will find a set of questions and steps so you can dig in and create your own fitness journey.

You'll find these at www.dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo34. First, start slow, take small deliberate steps, but buck that, "I need to work out six days a week for it to be worth it," thought. First thought hint, and choose three workouts over a 10-day period instead of seven. This will give your body a chance to recover from new activity and give you the space to renegotiate your calendar to begin fitting exercise in, and in a way that works for you.

Now, this is counterintuitive for you. I know how you're wired. I am a CEO coach. I am an entrepreneur coach. I know the people I love to serve and I am one. I love fast, I love results quickly. I love working really hard. But this is a place where you do a counterintuitive step of taking things much more slowly and it really releases any chance of resistance for your brain.

And why don't we do this? It's because of our thinking. Here's a few; because if I don't work out every day, I won't lose weight. That's classic. Or another thought, if I don't work out three times a week, it just isn't worth it. or if I don't go hot and heavy with the workouts, that would just be so lame, why would I do it anyway?

Now, this is our brain's unhelpful way of creating all or none. We have great weeks and then travel disrupts, we get sick and we get injured and you just don't get back on plan for like a month until you shame yourself back to the gym. We trigger so much resistance to exercise in our brain by believing these thoughts, this type of thinking. So it takes a mindset shift. And the

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action of doing things slow and spreading it out and really honoring three workouts in 10 days can help you get started.

You know, we trigger a huge ding in our self-esteem when we don't hit some elusive standard. And it's elusive, by the way. So this is a way to quiet the mind drama or the battle around working out altogether. And this just helps it to become more natural, to choose to move rather than not.

My body was really inflamed when I reached out for my first trainer. I was hiking on the weekends but not doing much else during the week. My hips hurt and I thought it was just because I was old. And that was 10 years ago.

That worked. I just took Advil and moved less until I felt better again. That wasn't really helpful. I worked with a trainer that helped people rehab from injury, and I'm so glad I did. He also was a functional trainer, so it felt like going to the playground every time I worked out. And it wasn't boring because we did something different every time.

My brain enjoyed the play. My body started recovering because I went in on it a lot more slowly than I normally do and I learned to stretch and hydrate myself so much better. I learned that most of my aches and pains were from being dehydrated, by the way, and that staying active actually helped the natural aches and pains to diminish a lot.

If you're really achy and that's your reason for not working out, it's really the opposite is true. Your body keeps telling you to prevent yourself from pain, so rest, it doesn't work. Staying active, you'll either feel about the same amount of pain, or it will release some of it, at least that's been my experience.

My sedentary days actually cause me more pain than my weightlifting days, trust me. So first is to slow down, spread out your expectations, and next, lean into activities that you want to do, not that you have to do, not that you should do, and even those that you want to try, those ones that you're curious about, you've always thought about.

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If you can think of this journey as a little bit of a trial and error as you figure out what works for you, this can be so much fun and not so discouraging. Try a Zumba class. Everybody trips over their feet the first class. But if you love it, go. What have you been dying to do and try? Put it on the calendar. Reach out, find out where those classes are.

Stop here and think about it, what would you do if failure wasn't an option, or even if failure was part of it and if it would give you great health results and a mental release, which we all need? The only reason we don't engage in activities that we really want to do, most times, is from the resistance our brain offers, like yoga is for those woo-woo people or yoga won't burn any calories, walking isn't enough, you need to run to get fit, or you can't go to that gym, everybody's going to laugh at you. That's just a sampling of what our brain offers.

It's just your brain. It's not helpful and it's not true. And one thing I know about people at fitness facilities, they're only worried about their own body. Watch them, they're only looking in the mirror and they're not looking at you. No one cares what you look like and my experience has been that those that are already in these classes felt the same way you did your first time and can't wait to help the next person feel welcome and comfortable. In fact, I think it's my role in my gym.

Again, stop here and ask yourself, why haven't you tried that one activity that you're dying to do? The answer will give you the information, and they're just obstacle thoughts. Note them and let them go.

Alright, the third step is learning to get very aware of what your body needs. What is your body asking for? I think this step is absolutely key, especially for those that are feeling a little burned out or bored with your current routine. And just like with mindful eating, this awareness will become stronger over time.

This is the most exciting step of the journey, at least from what I've learned, because learning that you can trust your body's signals and feedback on what works for you, it's key in preventing injury, for sure. This is where I

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discovered yoga, and believe me, my brain had a lot of thoughts around yoga. I'm not selling yoga here, although it might sound like it in a minute.

But I want to share with you my progression of thinking around yoga. Listen for your stories around anything you're resisting. Resisting is really sometimes a place we should face because sometimes it's actually the direction we should go. So listen for your stories of resistance as I talk about this.

If you're only thinking it's a workout if you're at CrossFit six days a week and you're not giving yourself some variety, as an example, I want you to listen in here. Honestly, I started yoga because I was so tight and uncomfortable from running all the time. I was ambitiously working on running a 15K and truly not giving myself enough time to work up to those miles. So I did a big run and I was always miserable days afterward. So I thought, well, I'll go to yoga. I need to stretch.

So, the first class I went to was deep stretching, and I was so ambitious about it, as much as I was with running, not really a yoga thing, right? And it wasn't really yoga. It was – I think I was in a room of other ambitious runners trying to stretch and I overstretched for sure. This is totally one of my fails.

I wanted to do what everybody else was doing and I definitely overstretched my muscles. But I did not give up because I knew there was something here. Something in me was yearning an understanding of this practice. After a lot of fits and starts, I found Ally, my favorite Yogi in Atlanta. Send me an email if you want to know where I practice. It's wonderful.

Ally leads restorative yoga. Again, isn't this fascinating that the first workout person was rehab and now restorative that I was actually drawn to. But both of them have helped me to be actually an athlete. I work out really hard.

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So this is the second time this kind of came long my way and I'm glad I didn't resist it. I learned so much. I felt such a release in my muscles by practicing in a gentle way and I kept with it. And then the magic happened.

In the quietness, on that mat, I was processing my thoughts. I was able to do, on that mat, what my self-coaching in the mornings with a coffee cup wasn't accomplishing. I was getting aware of my thoughts and becoming more meditative during each class. The whole-body experience of yoga has so served me. I'm glad I listened to what my body needed. I didn't give up until I found the right fit for me and now, I have truly healed my back and my hips.

I sit all day, but I don't hunch over. I have a beautiful posture now. And I even have a nerve issue in my back that no longer pinches me. I start every day with five minutes in child's pose and legs up the wall, at the most five minutes, those darn hamstrings are always tight for me. and this practice has given me the flexibility to lift weights, do circuit training, and to not get injured.

Somehow, I just knew this was something my body needed and I had to get over my obstacle or resistant thinking about yoga, and wow, the results are amazing. I invest only one hour a week and five minutes a day and it's changed everything.

Is there something in your life that you want to be doing around moving? Is it a small walk? Is it a certain practice, a certain class? Is it canoeing every weekend? Is there just something that you're dying to keep regular in your life? Don't give up.

It still surprises me that this small investment of time makes such a big difference. You know what I've learned here is that consistency is king. So is listening to those hunches of what your body might need, not because someone told you to, but because you're honoring what you know you'd like as well as what your body is asking for.

Last but not least, there's another step. And I really want to say again, I know the way you're wired. You're type-A like me. You're hard-charging.

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And this is why this is so important; I want you to stop battling the resistance but go towards it, and I want you to just slow down a little bit and not set your expectations so high because this will help you to hear what your body is telling you. You need a rest day or you need more sleep, whatever it might be.

Alright, I'll stop preaching here, but not so much. Last but not least, planning and deciding ahead of time is absolutely key. As well as a second facet of it, having a backup plan, especially for those days that plans just don't work, like today, I was trying to get to an event at 3:45 and I sat in traffic in the same place on a road for 40 minutes.

Wow, and so those are the days that you miss the class start, you miss the training workout, you know, training time. But when we learn to have a backup plan – and guess what, my backup plan was I was going to capitalize and use this time to record my podcast. But this is where, when we plan ahead, decide ahead of time and honor those commitments, this is where we build trust in ourselves on following through, but also break the perfectionistic way that many of us approach working out. I see you there.

This is where you can use the power of deciding ahead of time in two ways, deciding early in the week where your workout appointments go, consider these appointments as you would an appointment with a prospect or a client, and decide ahead of time what you're going to do instead if you miss it because of traffic, slew of evening meetings, or a heavy workout.

This is the space where we get so discouraged. We're all set to work out four times a week, we've signed up for the boot camp, health club, et cetera, and things happen. We're tired. It's lightning outside during your run time. But if you're committed and the world seems against you, having a backup plan is vital.

This is absolutely when you use your brain to your advantage. Check your calendar for appointments on Sunday night before you even start your work week. Plan your workouts. At least get two during the week and one on the

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weekend. And remember, I was suggesting three times a week in 10 days. It could be once during the week and once during the weekend.

If you're just getting started or it's one of those overscheduled weeks, just get a couple in. When we decide ahead of time and put it on our calendar, we take out the need for being motivated at 5:30. And I'm talking about AM and PM, right?

It's hard to be motivated at 5:30am when you're snoozing and the alarm clock just seems like it just went off and you just went to sleep. But it's also tough at 5:30pm when you are in traffic and you're pushing to get there.

Make these appointments non-negotiable. Honor them. Leave the office in time. Your brain is going to resist this at first, but as you keep honoring these commitments to yourself, you will create pride and trust that you will get it done.

And for those high-performers out there that might think that giving up the workout is helping your performance at work, it's usually the opposite because when we start giving up on ourselves during these moments when we plan to work out during the week, we might be giving up in pushing through and finishing things at work.

So if you teach yourself that you are going to show up when you say you are for yourself, for things that are important to you, you will start doing it more in other areas of your life. Now, you know the thoughts that get in the way here.

Here it is, if I spend just 15 more minutes on this project, I'll get it done. Oops, 30 minutes later, too late for the class. Or I just have to work harder, I can't stop, or I don't feel like it, I'm tired, or I'm just fried, I'm going to go have a beer and hang with the guys.

Now, by planning ahead of time, honoring this appointment with yourself, you create pride instead of consistent disappointment and discouragement that you're not following through on what you want to be doing. This

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confidence will bleed into other areas of your life and that's where we give up.

You know, we give up not exercising because we hate the feeling of not showing up for ourselves here. What? Yes, I want to repeat that. This all or none part comes from where we give up on the working out altogether because we're kind of sick of the drama when we are arguing with ourselves about whether we should workout at the end of the day. This is where deciding ahead of time takes your brain out of the drama space. Try it.

Now, also decide – and again, this is a commitment, a decision – what your backup plan is. Always know what you're going to do if the circumstances change. Again, this is just a subset of deciding ahead of time. And now you're protecting yourself from the disappointment that traffic delayed, you know, any of those things that got in the way or you were required to stay later at work, and it teaches you that you're still going to follow through no matter what. Believe me, this is mental fitness, for sure.

One of the reasons we do give up on working out and why I see it for my CEO clients is they're just sick of failing all the time at this fitness plan, like I mentioned before. And when we can't succeed at something, hey, it feels a lot better not to do it at all. Don't get into that trap.

Spread out your workout days like I'm suggesting here, give yourself some space. You know, I shared my story today to help you to see how these steps can apply to your life, but let's clarify so you can start making your plan. That's what's most important.

Start with three workouts over a 10-day period. Start small. Get moving. Add more variety as you move along. Start with walking or a mix of workouts, but just decide to start small.

Next, make a list of activities you want to do and include those you want to try. Make this fun and pull your brain out of resistance and create activities and plans that you actually look forward to. This is your time of day to play.

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Three, honor your body's needs. Do you need to sweat more? Do you need to do more strength? Do you need to do more stretching? Or do you need to rest? Really honor what your body needs. This comes after getting moving. This comes is you've noticed you're over-training. Those questions are really important. Again, that will be in the show notes.

Plan ahead. Planning ahead makes all of us more efficient because we drop the, should I go today or not and should I do it today, should I work instead? When we decide ahead of time, there's no conversation. We might even work more efficiently to kind of earn the ability to get out of the office and go. I know this works for me.

Remember my show notes are for your support. I've created a worksheet there for you that will give you that support that you need, a place to write down all the ideas that are coming up for you. Go there; dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo34. And remember, if you'd like more support, come get it.

Check out my website on that first page. Check out more about me. See if I'm for you and even just try my video series. It's all there. I hope you're having an amazing day. I hope you're going to think differently, slow down just a little bit, give yourself some grace, decide ahead of time and watch the brain drama drop. Use your brain for important creative things in your life, not this decision on whether you should work out every day.

I sure hope you've enjoyed the podcast. Please share with your friends and thanks so much for being a listener, I love serving you this way. Have a great day.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *Weight Loss for CEOs*. If you enjoyed this episode and want more, visit dianamurphycoaching.com for Diana's latest free coaching tools to get started losing weight without having to start a diet now.