



30. Is That My Body Talking?

By Amy Bomar, certified personal trainer

You're excited. You joined your local club and the aerobics class is about to start. It begins smooth enough, until you hear your instructor say "listen to your body and modify accordingly." You think, "WHAT? Does my instructor really think my body is going to speak to me? Listen to what? What should I expect to hear?" The instructor is letting you know that at times you are responsible for understanding your body's fitness capabilities and limitations. While your instructor is most likely trained in recognizing how participants are doing in the group exercise setting and they realize not everyone is at the same level at the same time, they can't see everything and can't feel what your body is saying nearly as well as you. The instructor, knowing he/she is limited in reading your outward signs, will try to teach you how to listen to your body and should be offering modifications to most all complicated or high impact movements. The modifications will give you the options you need to keep your exercise program safe and effective.

Your body may talk to you in a number of ways. Have you ever done repetitive exercises for a period of time and experienced a burning sensation? This sensation is from the build of lactic acid in the muscles. It is signaling you to slow down and allow your muscles to get the necessary oxygen they need. What do you think your body is saying when you find yourself gasping for breath? It's most likely screaming at you that your intensity is too high and it wants more oxygen. Slow down and allow your lungs to catch up. Your ability to sustain intense workouts will increase over time. Try to maintain a level that allows you to carry on a conversation during the workout.

"If it hurts don't do it". The saying remains true in exercise today. Pain is a loud signal from your body that something is up. Slow down or stop immediately. Check with your instructor or trainer to make sure you're doing the movement correctly. If pain persists you may need to see your personal physician. You were told when the nice man gave you the tour of the gym that regular exercise will give you more energy, but your body says you're exhausted at the end of your exercise routine. This may mean your over-training, not getting sufficient recovery time between workouts, or you are simply pushing too hard during the workout itself. Slow down, remember the F.I.T.T. principle, which gives you the elements for your optimal health. It includes guidelines for exercise intensity, duration, and frequency.

Pay attention to your body. It can tell you many things. When you hear it talking, listen and follow its advice. Don't allow your ego to cause you to try and keep up with the person on the step, treadmill, or squat rack next to you. You're competing only against your best self. Use your instructor's modifications. It won't be too long before you are the one others wish they were keeping up with. Make it a Healthy Day!

Special thanks to Amy Bomar, certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor. Visit: <http://www.fitlaunch.com> to find a wealth of health and fitness information including discussion groups, chat room, and exercise samples.