



Exercise addiction: **Are you at risk?**

Many women think that with achieving a fabulous figure like fashion models comes happiness, wealth, and the ideal mate. They will often exercise to a dangerous point in pursuit of “their dream body,” say Dr. Julia Samton, a neuropsychiatrist, and Certified Personal Trainer Franci Cohen who speak out about the dangers of pushing yourself past your limit.

“For some girls, this desire for that picture-perfect life can lead to exercise addiction—the beginning of this quest for perfection,” says Dr. Samton.

Typical symptoms of someone who is letting exercise take over her (or his) life:

- **Intention effects.** The amount of exercise or length of exercise sessions is longer than originally intended.

- **Time.** Large amounts of time are spent exercising and conflict with other areas of life.
- **Continuance.** The person will continue to exercise even with persistent physical or psychological issues that are made worse from exercising, such as a recurring injury.

“The biggest red flag,” according to Dr. Samton, “would be when exercise starts to interfere with one’s occupational, social, and overall functioning. It’s at this point that treatment is recommended.”

“Cognitive behavioral therapy can be helpful, but seeking a therapist with experience in exercise addiction is crucial. For extreme cases, there are inpatient treatment facilities,” says Dr. Samton.