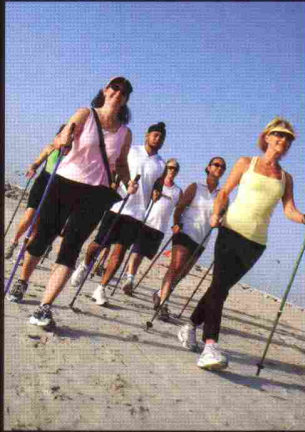


SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO KEEP YOU ON TRACK TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Anne O'Connell

Sometimes it's hard to stay focused and on track at the best of times. When life seems to be in disarray, the first thing that goes by the wayside is the workout routine...if you've even been able to get into a "routine" since moving to Dubai.

Over and over you hear the experts say that it's easier to live a healthier lifestyle if you find activities you enjoy. Then it's not so much like "working out." So many fitness crazes have come and gone; some stick and some don't. So many people just haven't found the one that works best for them. So, in the meantime, while you wait for the ever-elusive perfect work out to come along (or just one that "works" for you), you just head to the mall. Let's face it; there are plenty to choose from!



Well, here's something new and different that just might work for you. It's happening on Jumeirah Beach, in Safa Park, on The Palm, the Creek Park and (now that it's getting hotter) in the mall too. Pole-walking is really catching on as Keenfit the walking pole company, introduced here in the Middle East by Canadian Joanna Macdonald, presents an alternative to the daily grind of exercise, injecting more fun and a healthy mind and body twist.

"I used to be a marathon runner but unfortunately my knees started giving me a problem and my friends in Kelowna who had started a company selling walking poles suggested I give it a try in Dubai."

We all have excuses for not exercising whether it's an injury or lack of time. Once Joanna started using the Keenfit walking poles she recognized that, since she couldn't run anymore, pole walking could be the perfect exercise for her. It worked out so well, she thought others could benefit too. With an entrepreneurial spirit, a strong background in corporate marketing and communications and a new-found passion for health and wellness, Joanna set about establishing Keenfit Dubai, LLC.

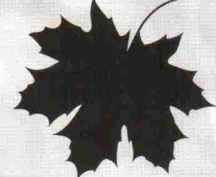
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"As I began offering the clinics, more and more people from all walks of life started to show interest and I saw an amazing combined benefit for the participants that is unique to a multi-cultural community such as Dubai," said Joanna. "Everyone was getting a great workout and, as people from different countries walked side by side, they were also learning about other cultures and philosophies as well as enjoying the outdoors, soaking up some vitamin D and inhaling the scents of the flowers in the park or the sea breezes on the beach. It makes the time go by so quickly you don't even realize you're exercising."

Pole walking in Dubai is attracting both men and women of all fitness levels, ages and ethnicities as they learn about the myriad of benefits ranging from increased energy and weight loss to improved posture and better cardio health. According to several recent studies, adding poles to your brisk walk can increase calorie burning by 40 percent and aerobic benefit by more than 20 percent and add years to your life.



"A regular walk does not engage the upper body which contains half the body's muscle mass," says Joanna. "Once you add the uniquely designed, Keenfit walking poles you've introduced a full-body work-out." "Pole walking is also great if you've been told you can't run anymore because of orthopedic problems, like I was" says Joanna. "Walking is the most natural thing to do for the body. The poles help support the knees by taking the pressure off and there's a spring system in the middle that activates when you plant the poles. They also give good back support and realign you so you're balanced on both sides." Joanna and her partners recognized that it's easier to find reasons not to exercise than to find the right healthy lifestyle balance that suits a person's work schedule, family commitments, physical ability and mental state. They call these "Exercuses" and it's a good place to start when determining why you just can't get back on track.



Some common exercsuses:

Exerscuse:

This time of year it's way to hot!

Answer:

You've probably heard of mall walking...now there's mall pole-walking. Join the Keefit pole-walking group in Ibn Batutta Mall - air conditioning included.

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Or, start one in the mall closest to you. Or, join the walk on the beach with cool sea breezes and finish off with a swim.

Exerscuse:

I'm too busy...I don't have a minute to spare.

Answer:

Like everything in life, you have to set priorities. Make living healthy a priority and schedule a fun, energetic activity for 30 minutes, 5 days a week. Make it quality time together with the family.

Exerscuse:

I've always found exercising so boring!

Answer:

That's why you have to find something fun and do it in an environment you find energizing with people you enjoy. Doesn't sound so bad now, does it?

Exerscuse:

I'm really not very coordinated. Nothing comes easily to me.

Answer:

If you can walk, you can pole walk. You can attend as many Keefit clinics as you need to feel comfortable and confident and see if it's really the right fit for you.

Exerscuse:

I don't have the energy.

Answer:

If you're tired and rundown, most times adding a physical activity to your daily routine will give you more energy!

Exerscuse:

I'll do it tomorrow.

Answer:

So often tomorrow never comes. So, why not do it today?

Exerscuse:

I can't afford it.

Answer:

Walking is the easiest and cheapest physical activity to do on a regular basis. Just lace up your sneakers and head out the door. If you want to add poles, it's a very reasonable one-time expense and the returns are invaluable.

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According to Joanna, the first step is to identify your Exerscuse, overcome it and get out there and "Walk Your Path." Whether you need the structure of a scheduled class or prefer to set your own pace, there's plenty to offer here in Dubai.

Keenfit weekly pole walking clinics are held throughout Dubai and demo poles are available for you to try. For a schedule of free clinics call 050-559 7137 or visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.keenfit-me.com"](http://www.keenfit-me.com) www.keenfit-me.com Keenfit Dubai, founded in 2007, is part of an international company that was established in Kelowna, BC, Canada in 1998. The Keenfit philosophy encourages one to walk tall and be as balanced as you can both physically and emotionally. Keenfit's mission is to inform, inspire, empower & support people to become accountable for themselves so they can find balance, live in peace and walk as their true self. Sidebar - can be reprinted with permission from Sheri Simson of Kelowna, BC (the originator of Keenfit Walking Poles).

Exerscuse™ Combat Tips:

Set your poles up & put them out where you'll almost trip over them

Give each pole a name & make them your walking buddies

Make an appointment / date with yourself (like you would to have your hair done or to go shopping)

Be conscious of your intentions & choose to keep that date with yourself (remember - if you're not conscious & don't choose - you're letting your true (unconscious) intentions win out!)

Plant Flowers (positive thoughts) - visualize yourself feeling & looking good in a beautiful bathing suit or summer dress - remember focusing for a quick moment on your wobbly bits & how unattractive you may feel right now - can be good motivation - but any more than that - is just fertilizer on your weeds (negative thoughts). Read more on: "Plant Flowers in the Garden of your Mind."

Commit to meeting & walking with a friend - if you can't get a friend to come out with you - join a Keenfit Walking Club or start your own.

Just - get out & get going! (I know it takes energy to exercise - but the cool thing is you'll get energy by exercising!)

Don't over do it - don't be slack either (Listen to your body and respect yourself - being a drill sergeant is one thing & being a lazy bones is another - it's all about moderation - find the middle road!)

Remember your goal should be to get a minimum of 30 min's of moderate intensity exercise at least 5 or more days per week (note: 30 min's of regular Pole Walking can = up to 50 min's of regular walking! - bonus!)