



# Movement

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE



# Movement Rehabilitation

## The Early Years

I grew up in a diet-infested household. My mother, the saint that she is (and she is, she honestly deserves a gold medal for motherhood), has her struggles with body dysmorphia and dieting. And despite doing her best to raise her five daughters feeling confident and beautiful, we couldn't avoid picking up on her internalized beliefs. Because of this, I have spent the better part of the last decade trying to work through my rigid 'exercise' rules and beliefs.

I say the word exercise here because, for a long time, I could not separate diet culture (movement to shrink or change my body) from joyful movement (a movement that correlates with positive emotions, stress relief, endorphin rush, better sleep, and more). Now while you get the same benefits of joyful movement during exercise, my intentions behind 'exercise' hindered my ability to enjoy movement.

As I left home, I took many of these beliefs with me. Some of these beliefs included:

- Exercise for less than 1 hour didn't count and gave me no benefit.
- If I did not exercise every day, my day was unproductive, and I was unhealthy.
- For my exercise to count I needed to be breathing hard and sweating for most of the workout.
- Running was the best way to change my body.



## March into May Connect to Movement

Every spring, Healthy Lifestyles hosts our most popular program - **March into May**.

This year's March into May program is all about connecting to movement. We want each of you to find the joy that comes with moving your body.

This year we have compiled new movement activities for you to try. Including hiking, TRX, Zumba, Pickleball, walking workshops and more! All designed to get you moving.

Don't hesitate to sign-up, **Registration for March into May ends on March 8th, 2024.**

Being a full-time student and working full-time, I struggled to maintain my rigid exercise rules. It didn't matter that I lived a mile from campus and walked it every day, plus all my walking between classes, it didn't matter that I worked as a nursing assistant, and had a labor-intensive job of lifting and rolling patients for hours each day. It didn't matter that my body and mind were physically exhausted from only getting 5-6 hours of sleep at night. In my mind, I was a failure, a failure for not working out every day, and a failure for not figuring out how.

This spiraled into exercise 'binges' where I would work out for hours to the point, I could barely walk the next day. I would restrict foods which resulted in binge eating, and the way I felt about my body became increasingly negative. Over the next several years I would cycle through a sedentary life, to an extremely active.

My life also continued forward, I got married, graduated college, had 3 babies, and began working for Salt Lake County. But through those years I continued to struggle and wanted desperately to feel happy and at home in my own body. I didn't want to perpetuate my body image issues onto my children. So, I began searching for ways to heal myself. This is when I discovered intuitive eating and joyful movement.

## Intuitive Eating

Intuitive Eating is an eating framework of self-care, developed by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch. It is rooted in science and informed by clinical experience. The practice of intuitive eating helps create a healthy relationship with food while honoring both physical and mental health.



The premise of intuitive eating is remembering that we were all born intuitive eaters. Every one of us knew how to eat when we were hungry and stop when we were full. But over time and through cultural indoctrination, we forget how to listen to our bodies.

Intuitive Eating teaches:

- How to reconnect to your hunger-fullness cues.
- To overcome barriers that prevent you from listening to your body.
- Enjoyment and taste are important factors of the eating experience.

The Intuitive Eating framework follows 10 principles to help guide you to become more in-tune with your body. The ninth principle of intuitive eating is joyful movement.

Movement is important and necessary for our body to function at an optimal capacity. Our body craves movement and activity but when we remove the crucial element of joy, we create something unsustainable and that becomes a chore. Joyful movement takes the pressure out of "should" and "should not" by adopting a flexible mindset.

## The Truth about Dieting

### 2/3 of dieters

Studies show that 2/3 individuals who go on a diet and lose weight will *regain more weight* than they lost. 35% of normal dieters progress to pathological dieting.

### Dieting Increases Risk

Dieting increases risk of eating disorders, binge eating, weight cycling, food preoccupation, body dissatisfaction, weight stigma, depression and anxiety.

### 95% of Diets Fail

Diet cycling can be detrimental to your health, but the desire for results, keep you coming back for more. The global weight loss industry will be worth \$377.3 billion by 2026.

### Body Image Matters

Studies have shown that those with positive body image are more likely to engage in movement. This is because they engage for the feeling not the goal to change.

## Back to My Journey

When I began my intuitive eating and joyful movement journey, I realized that I first needed to relearn how to love my body.

Our bodies are amazing and incredibly resilient to the abuse we put them through. They also change throughout time and can feel foreign to us even though we are living in them.

So, I began studying Intuitive Eating and put in the time to try to heal my body and mind. It took me some time, but I finally came to the realization that I needed to recognize all the things my body does do.

My body allows me to work and raise three crazy boys. My body also housed and evicted those 3 boys. My body allows me to walk, drive, and navigate the world I live in. It allows me to feel joy, sadness, pleasure, pain and much more. I just needed to take the time to recognize its amazing capacity.

Once I learned to appreciate my body, the second part of my healing journey began. I needed to be a partner and friend to my body.

Through intuitive eating, I learned there were two essential components to supporting and strengthening my body.

The first is healing my relationship with food and honoring my hunger and fullness.

The second is through movement. Not forced, required movement, but joyful movement. But this in and of itself was going to be a journey for me.

## Re-Engaging in Movement

The first thing I did was release myself of all my 'rules.' For me this meant first I took a break from exercise. I did not engage in my typical exercise routine instead I focused on treating myself with love and respect each day. I learned that I was worthy of

## TRX: Total Resistance Training



Every **Thursday** in March from **1-1:30pm**, there will be **FREE** beginner TRX classes.

Hosted at the Government Center in S4-600

**Come join us and try something new!**



self-acceptance, and I was healthy regardless of if I intentionally exercised.

Then, I started recording all the ways I was moving my body. I began recognizing that I was moving often by chasing my kids at the park, scootering around the neighborhood, and walking during meetings. I was moving my body each day, whether I was doing it intentionally or not.

Once I had reached this level of understanding, I decided to try to find ways to intentionally move that made me excited at the prospect of movement.

I started exploring all the ways I could move my body and found what worked for me and what didn't.



I stopped seeing movement as 'exercise' and instead found it as a way for self-care and self-respect. Along the way, I learned a few things and I rewrote my 'rules.'

- **Movement is movement.** Whether I run six miles or walk up the stairs, movement is movement and it ALL counts.
- **The best type of movement is the movement you will do and enjoy.** Joyful movement can positively affect every aspect of our lives from our feelings of self-worth to relationships, to better sleep, to a more positive outlook on life. When we get up and move our bodies, we feel and think better.
- **Movement is about wellness.** It is not about shrinking my body, it's about better sleep, stress relief, mood stability, risk reduction of chronic illnesses, the ability to keep up with my young kids, and so much more.

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## Conclusion

Discover your method for finding joy in movement. Each of us has a unique and individual relationship with movement, so each journey will be different. As March into May begins, I encourage you to find ways to enjoy your movement and, if needed, heal your connection to your body. I also encourage you to try something new. Try yoga, Zumba, or pickleball for the first time. Commit to getting out of your office and joining Healthy Lifestyles' walking groups and workshops. Maybe try out your local recreation center and see what classes and teams they offer. The options are endless. Remember there is no right or wrong way to move your body. The most important thing is to feel connected and appreciative of our bodies and honor that connection through joyful movement.



### WRITTEN BY:

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Kiersten is passionate about many things but above all empowering those around her with knowledge on how to take charge of their own lives and health.

Kiersten grew up all around the country but settled in Utah during college over 10 years ago. She is a mother to 3 rambunctious boys, with her 4th boy on the way. She is an avid book club girlie and loves to sit on a beach any time she can. Her favorite daily activities include scootering around town with her boys and cozying up in bed after a long day with hot chocolate.

Interested in learning and chatting more with Kiersten? Join her for a one-on-one health coaching session, sign-up in Wellsteps.

