

Get un-Stuck!

The road to fitness is sometimes a group effort

By MONIQUE SAVIN

Let's meet seven women who are no longer Stuck on their health and fitness plan.

Stuck, a new 13-part series (beginning Wednesday at 9:30 p.m. on the W Network) follows the women as they try to achieve together what they could not alone: Body confidence through a health and weight-loss program.

For some, the biggest challenge is developing the mental muscle to show up for workouts. Others are facing more severe consequences of an unhealthy lifestyle, such as heart disease and depression.

The journey begins as they share personal histories and results of a fitness assessment. One is shocked to discover her weight now exceeds her husband's.

Using the help of a fitness trainer and dieticians, they wrestle with their bad food habits, overcome procrastination and balance new fitness regimens with families, careers and social lives.

Stuck chronicles what it takes to achieve lasting change and provides three important components of a successful transformation: Supportive environment, follow-through and measureable progress.

GROUP INFLUENCE

The theme among the women is that they've started but failed to follow through with a program.

In the show, each woman learns the skill set to help achieve consistency.

"The idea that you are supposed to fit a program from a workout book or diet, just do it and stick with it yourself, doesn't work for many women," says series producer, Marianne Kushmaniuk.

Most of these women haven't been physically active since leaving school, she adds.

Along with the trainers and nutrition experts, the group slowly becomes a web of support, providing success skills to each other to work through challenges.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Future episodes reveal how the women confront their food demons, exercise resistance and begin breaking bad habits and creating healthier ones. Oh, and meltdowns.

"Often women lament they aren't even fit enough to start an exercise program," says Kushmaniuk.

The range of abilities in the group quickly becomes apparent, adding performance pressure. Nicole, a former team athlete, dives in head-first. Bonnie, the self-professed couch potato and "gym loser," has a much harder time adjusting.

As much as a new lifestyle is challenging for the women, the show also reveals it's not easy living with a dieter. Husbands, children and friends can be allies, or enemies.

MEASURABLE PROGRESS

"Women get obsessive about numbers," says Kushmaniuk. That's why at the halfway point the group backed off the data and began measuring progress by holistic standards.

"So instead of getting wound up, they made short-and long-term goals as they went," says Kushmaniuk. "Not one year I'll be 50 pounds lighter. It was never about who's faster, stronger or lost the most. And the women knew they had the group there whether they failed or succeeded. When they were pushed out of a comfort zone, they felt excited by their athleticism."

In the final episode, the women are buoyed by their unified outward transformation: Fat loss, sexy muscle tone and sassy new hairdos, and the audience sees the cast also get an inner makeover.

The series shows the payoff is making friends with each other and their own bodies.

One woman and her husband celebrated by going to Florida.

"I'm feeling good," she says. "It's not the best body around the pool, but I feel so much better about myself."