We know regular exercise promotes good health, so it remains a puzzle why so many of us hate it. Maybe we dislike it because of early unpleasant experiences, like grade school physical education class where we wore dorky shorts or we were clumsy and not as athletic as the other kids. Or possibly, we have a history of joining a gym and dropping out after a few weeks.

But, when find ourselves huffing and puffing after putting a box on the top shelf, bending over to tie our shoes, or walking up the stairs, it is time to focus on ways to understand and overcome our resistance to exercise.

Personality and Exercise
We know our personality traits affect our health and lifestyle choices, including our propensity to exercise. People who struggle to be physically active on a regular basis often cite multiple reasons to dislike traditional exercise. Experts say that excuses are symptoms of a bigger problem, a mismatch between a person’s approach to exercise and his or her personality.1

Since ancient times, humans have sought to explain behavior by categorizing personalities into distinct types. The Myers Briggs® Type Indicator (MBTI®) developed in the 1940s, is a widely used and highly regarded system for understanding and interpreting personality, and derives most of its underpinning theory from Carl Jung’s ideas. The MBTI® model is a method for understanding personality and preferred modes of behaving. It is not a measurement of intelligence or competence, emotional state, or mental stability.2,3

In 1949, Cattel published the 16PF (personality factors), one of the longest-standing and most widely used personality testing systems of all. Cattell’s theory asserts that every person possesses a degree of each of the sixteen traits. The Cattell systems also include an interpretation of the Big Five factors, the commonly used term for the model of personality which describes the five fundamental factors of our personality.2,4

Personality and Color
It is common perception that colors influence our mood and emotions. Color personality tests take it a step farther and suggest that not only our current state of emotions but also future behaviors can be determined with the help of our preferred choice of colors.5,6

The most prominent theorist arguing that color preferences and personality are linked is Luscher. He proposed that individuals with similar color preferences should also possess similar personality characteristics. Further, that the physiological reactions that individuals experience while viewing primary colors (blue, red, yellow, and green) reflect basic psychological needs of the individuals.7 He also theorized that our choice for four major colors depicts our emotional reactions in the real world situations. Psychologists agree that different colors may have different influence upon different people, depending upon their past related memories.2,5

We see color through the specific cells in the retina of our eyes. They contain three major pigments; blue, green, and yellow. They collect the related information from our environment and transmit that to our primary visual cortex where it is processed to be understood.5,6

One of the most popular color personality tests is the True Colors Personality Test, used primarily to open up lines of communication and bring students together to have a higher appreciation for one another.8 The True colors spectrum are the colors blue, green, gold, and orange.

At the most basic level, color has been shown to affect our mood, thereby affecting the way we interact with our environment. A growing body of research in environmental psychology has shown that the color of a room or work setting can have profound effects on individual enjoyment and performance on a variety of tasks.

Recently, these concepts have been introduced into the fitness and exercise world. By using a personality-centered approach to exercise based in the personality type framework popularized by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® instrument, individuals who dislike exercise are more likely to participate in a fitness program. There are eight sets of preferences, each corresponding to a color. By identifying our specific color we get a snapshot of our exercise personality.9

Depending on the color that matches to personality traits, we gain an understanding of the motivational patterns, preferred interactions, and environments, and can more effectively choose specific forms of physical activity. It gets to the heart of why people resist making fitness a part of their lives and encourages getting rid of the excuses and sticking to the program.

Critics argue that just knowing our color preference does not give us the discipline to commit to a fitness program and make it a part of our lifestyle. But knowing what kind of exercise we like seems to be a good first step.
In generalized terms, Red personality types are sensing, thinking in their functioning; their orientation is through external stimuli. The Red makes up only 15 percent of the population. Reds are very direct, yet self-contained with their speech and emotions. They speak with a forceful and loud voice. Reds dress for success. They hate indecision, chit chat, and losing control. Color personality tests associate it with enthusiasm, strength and competitiveness. Reds are drawn to fast-paced activities that involve speed and thrills and that demand quick reflexes.

Yellow personality types are intuitive, thinking in their functioning; their core mental function is right-left brain, and they are good problem solvers. Yellow personality makes up 35 percent of the world population. They are open but indirect in their communication. Very casual and comfortable is the way they dress. Yellows are very dependable, and they are the most patient people you’ll ever meet.

Green personality types are intuitive, feeling in their functioning; their orientation to the world is toward people and the need for relationships. The Greens makes up 35 percent of the population and are self-contained, analytical people. They love to ask why and hate being late. Color tests show they prefer to be outdoors and exercise through activities of daily living, such as yard maintenance, parking a mile from their office, or using the stairs instead of elevators.

Blues make up only 15 percent of the population. They are open and direct in their speech. Blues are all about having fun. They are some of the most creative people in the world. Color personality tests consider them creative, balanced, and harmonious. Blues are guided by clear fitness goals and objectives. Blues exercise for a purpose and gravitate to traditional exercise, based on proven methods.

In recent approaches, the colors of personality also include purple, white, saffron, silver, and gold. The color personality tests consider Golds to be organizers who value work and service-oriented tasks. They have a purposeful approach to exercise and physical activity because it’s the right thing to do for a balanced and fit life.

Silvers tend to focus on group activities such as training for a marathon with a group, skiing or biking with friends, walking meetings with colleagues, or competitive ballroom dancing. Saffrons prefer an easy-going approach and are attracted to easy access to exercise that requires minimal process or advance planning. Purples prefer a consistent approach to exercise and comfortably maintain that routine such as repetitive cardio activities which do not require focused attention. They get into a mental zone.

Exercise can be anything we do that isn’t just sitting or lying down. We know that people are more motivated and happy when they are performing and working in a way that is natural to them. We know color significantly influences aspects of who we are and what we do. We recognize that the patterns of personality are identifiable and testing accessible, and we know that people respond differently to different stimuli. Combining color preference with personality traits to better understand what motivates us seems a viable key to achieving our fitness goals in the most enjoyable and effective way possible.

References

A complete index of Wellness Milestones Columns can be found on the AANA Wellness Program homepage at www.aanawellness.com