



Beaverdale

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Fitness**January 2009****Pilates**

Tips for Making and Keeping your New Year's Fitness Resolutions

Now is the time to make your New Year's resolutions. The number one New Year's resolution is to lose weight. The other big one is to start (or get back on) an exercise program. The busiest day in fitness centers is the Monday after New Years. People are motivated to start this year right and be different from all the other years when they started an exercise program or started a diet and then watched it fade by the end of January.

Q & A: How can I stick to my New Year's Resolutions this year?

First, I don't like the term "New Year's Resolution". I'd rather just call them "Annual Goals". The problem with calling them New Year's Resolutions is that it sounds too much like it's a one time deal – you make them at New Years, and then forget about them come February. By calling them annual goals, they are truly goals you intend to work on for the entire year. New Years is a good time to sit down and draw out goals for the upcoming year. So here are a few tips for writing fitness-related goals (resolutions) that you can keep and a few tactics for keeping them going all year long.

I'd suggest you write up 3-5 goals for yourself for the year. One or two of these may be related to your health and fitness, the other may be professional/work related, family oriented or just some fun goals. Spend some quiet time thinking these over, what your real passions are for your life. It's helpful to go through an exercise where you create your own mission statement. There's some free mission statement building tools on the web where you can do this – check out www.FranklinCovey.com/tc/ and click on 'Tools and Resources'. By doing this first, you identify what your key roles in life are and then you can build more appropriate goals around them.

Writing goals for yourself is a very good habit to get into. While you may not accomplish everything you set out to do, chances are you won't accomplish nearly as much if you don't write them down in the first place. So put them in writing. You may also wish to share them with a close friend or family member so they can understand what you are doing and help you. When writing goals, make sure they are goals you really want for yourself. If your heart really isn't into it but you think it's something you should do, chances are not good you will succeed. So pick 3-5 goals that are meaningful to you and that you are willing to prioritize your life around this coming year. For example, if you really, really want to lose weight, make a goal around that. If your spouse/friend/doctor tells you to lose weight but you don't really want to, that would not be a good goal even if it is something you should do. You have to want it for it to be successful.

Goals also need to be measureable. Rather than saying "I will exercise more", state it as "I will exercise four days a week". Or, rather than "I will lose weight", state it as "I will lose 4 pounds per month". Another good one is to improve your diet. Rather than saying "I will eat more healthy foods", say "I will eat at least 5 fruits/vegetables per day". Then keep track. Keep a log of your exercise or diet habits so you can see if you are staying on track with what you planned to do. This keeps you on course and provides a way to measure whether you are making progress. Just like writing down your goals, by writing your progress down, you will keep your goals top of mind and have a greater probability of sticking with them, especially as you start to see progress.

Goals need to be realistic. It's good to have stretch goals – those goals that will really challenge you, but they must be attainable or it will be too easy to give up on them if you know they are impossible. Break your goals into parts. Some parts may be easier to obtain than others. If you can at least obtain parts of your goals, you will still be successful.

Here's an example of a well written goal.

Goal: I will lose 12 pounds by May 1.

- Subgoals:
- a) I will lose 3 pounds per month between now and May 1
 - b) I will exercise at least 3 hours per week
 - c) I will eat 5 fruits & vegetables per day
 - d) I will switch to 1% milk

The first three subgoals can be tracked. The fourth you can do right away and continue doing.

Finally, keep these goals someplace where you can review them each week. Set aside time on a Sunday evening or early Monday morning and make a habit of reviewing your goals. Take your annual goals and break them into weekly bite-sized pieces. If you use some sort of personal planner or organizer, put these weekly goals in that.

To summarize, the real keys to success in keeping your New Year's Resolutions are:

- Choose goals that are very important and meaningful to you
- Make these goals realistic and tangible
- Write them down and review them weekly, and track your progress.

This may all sound like a lot of work, but if you don't put some effort into your own goals, then they will likely just turn into short term resolutions. And we know what that means.

Quick Fit Tip of the Month: Did you realize that exercising a half hour a day, six days a week represents less than 2% of the time in your week? Isn't your health and fitness worth at least 2% of your time during the week? Make exercise a priority and build it into your schedule!

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