



GETTING ON TRACK

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Once again we find ourselves ringing in a new year. While a new year brings reason to celebrate, it may also bring stress for some. One word comes to mind: resolution – a word that carries the burden of a history filled with disappointment. If you’ve caught yourself saying, “last year I didn’t accomplish any of my goals, but this year will be different,” then welcome to the club. Membership fee: one failed New Year’s resolution. But for the mere 8% of the population who achieves their resolutions, the word carries a sense of accomplishment and a powerful life-changing force. Never fear because things can and will be different for you this year.

Let’s travel back in time, say 4,000 years ago, to the time of the Babylonians. Instead of setting goals to lose weight or to quit smoking, the Babylonians made promises to their gods in hopes that they’d earn good favor for their crops or to reach the ripe old age of 43 in the coming year. Fast forward to today and people are still setting goals to improve their livelihood (and frequently their waistlines) with or without making promises to a higher power.

Somewhere along the line, gyms and fitness centers began seeing a huge boost in memberships. Sales increase 33-50% from the moment the ball drops in Times Square, which means you are not alone in your quest to get fit and healthy! In fact, losing weight and staying healthy are among the top five resolutions every year.

If you’re anything like me, your resolutions typically include working out more, eating healthier, and saving money. Realistically though, following through with these resolutions is difficult. Some would say life just gets too busy and there never seems to be enough time. These are reasons why you’ve failed in the past – are they really reason enough to keep failing?

Sure, January may be the perfect month for keeping up with your resolution, but as soon as that snowstorm hits, your goal of running outside before work vanishes into the cold, thin winter air. Your (not yet) newly established routine gets thrown off and excuses take over. We’ve all been there. I like to call it the “resolution wall.” This wall prevents us from accomplishing our goals – until now.

Below are eight ways that you can get over the resolution wall, particularly as it pertains to eating and exercising better, and onto the right track to claiming your new self:

1. Ask yourself “what do I really want?” – Which goal(s) can you not live without achieving? When you make your resolution(s), something you really want and not something you should be interested in achieving, you’re more likely to expend energy toward achieving it. Do you want to lose weight or gain muscle? Did your doctor recommend

getting more exercise or eating less salt? You have the freedom to choose what you really want!

2. Plan Ahead. Start thinking about your resolution well before January 1st. This will help broaden your horizons and will cause you to pay more attention to your life and all the positive changes you can make even before the new year.

3. Stick to one, maybe two resolutions. If you overburden yourself with too many resolutions, you may never achieve any of them or worse, you may forget what they even are! If you focus your attention and time on one or two goals and really plan them out in specific detail, you will feel a lot less overwhelmed and a lot more accomplished once you achieve them.

4. Set a goal that is manageable and specific. Go as far as planning out which days and times of the week you will set aside time to work on your resolution. For example, if fitness is the goal, a trainer and/or nutritionist can help create a workout and eating plan that’s suitable for you, your schedule and your goals.

5. Give yourself time. Time is on your side. Don’t expect to lose a whopping 40 pounds in two months. Planning out short-term and long-term goals within your resolution will offer you a realistic timeline in which to find success.

6. It takes many small battles to win a war. Staying fit and healthy is the big goal, but how do you get there? Lots of tactics, like increasing your daily protein intake, eating 5 to 7 meals a day, being active more than 3 times a week, eating breakfast every morning or increasing your intake of antioxidant-rich foods, are the tools that will help get you off to a good start and stay on the right track.

7. Choose a partner in crime. Ask a friend or significant other to be your resolution buddy. You’re more likely to get up at 6am to go to the gym or yoga studio when you’re doing it with someone else. It’s also a great way to bond and spend more time with those you love.

8. Reward yourself! Many of us “want, should and need” ourselves into loony town, but forgetting to congratulate and positively motivate ourselves could be detrimental to reaching our goals. If you’re craving a sweet treat, make it as healthy as you can and indulge without feeling guilty.

EVEN IF THIS YEAR’S NOT THE YEAR YOU 100 PERCENT ACCOMPLISH YOUR RESOLUTION, IT’S OKAY. MY HOPE IS THAT YOU’LL HAVE MANY MORE YEARS TO TRY AGAIN. IN THE END, RECOGNIZING THINGS NEED TO CHANGE AND TAKING STEPS TOWARD CHANGING YOUR LIFE FOR THE BETTER IS A VICTORY IN ITSELF.