



Keep the New Year's Resolutions Going Strong All Year Long

Luci Gabel
MA, MBA, ACSM, ACE

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The most popular New Year's resolutions in America are those that involve making improvements in physical fitness. Having been in the fitness industry for many years, I've witnessed the hard work that people do in January as they strive to reach their fitness goals. I also witness that when February rolls around, people start to lose motivation. And, when March is upon us, most fitness resolutions have been thrown to the wayside in exchange for all the other competing activities in our lives!

If you've set fitness goals for yourself this January, there is a way to avoid that typical cycle and be successful in reaching your goals. In fact, reaching your fitness goals can be easy if you remember the following three points: do things that you like, break your big goals down into small ones, and have patience with yourself. It's easy to stick with something if you like doing it!

There are many fitness activities, both indoor and out, that you might enjoy doing on a regular basis. For instance, you can exercise with a friend, or with a personal trainer. You can find a class that interests you. Of course, there are exercise classes at the gym, and there are also other classes that offer opportunities to exercise as you learn something new, for example: rowing, dancing, or gardening. There are groups and clubs that get together to do things like biking, hiking, or skating. There are so many options out there! The most important point is that if you find something you like, you'll look forward to doing it, and it'll be much easier and more fun to incorporate the new activity into your life.

Whatever change you chose to make needs to be one that's reasonable and one that fits into your daily routine and lifestyle. Big goals are reached best when broken down into smaller parts, so pick one or two small goals that are in alignment with your big goal and work on them until you get them down. If you don't currently exercise, start to exercise once per week. If you have an exercise routine then you can add an extra day, or add 5-10 more minutes to your cardiovascular program or a few more pounds to your weights. Once you've succeeded with your first small changes, pick another one or two. This way your goals will be easier to achieve and you'll see success much sooner. Each small success will provide you with the incentive and confidence that you need to approach your next challenge.

The thing to remember is: any additional exercise you do, anything more than what you have already been doing is going to improve your fitness level. Finally, remember that it takes at least 6 weeks of doing something consistently to create a new habit. Try not to get discouraged or torment yourself when you miss a step, because that only makes things more difficult and less fun. When you slip up try to understand why it happened so that you can avoid doing it next time, and then move on! Acknowledge yourself each time you do something in line with your goals, and reward yourself in a small way when you reach a goal. As long as you're on track and consistent the majority of the time, you're guaranteed to become healthier, and that's what counts.

Getting into shape and improving your fitness level doesn't have to be hard. It can actually be enjoyable if



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you find activities that you like and give yourself some time to get used to them. By setting small goals and reaching each one, you'll be successful in achieving what you set out to do this past January. And you'll find that next January, you'll be setting your goals from a brand new starting place!

It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!

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