

Ok so you did it, is it still working for you?

So we're about a month into the New Year. How is that fitness resolution coming along? Are you still on target? Have you dropped all those pounds yet? Did you know that according to statistics, most people have already given up on those resolutions! You don't have to panic. If you want solutions that last longer than your resolutions did then keep reading.

You really need to make sure your goals are realistic. You probably started off with the best of intentions. Some of the problems we face are that we tend to set goals that are unattainable and therefore we give up too easily instead of taking the common sense approach and revising them. We want dramatic results and we want them when? Yesterday of course! Does that sound familiar? Here lies another problem, we didn't get this way overnight and yet we want that diet or magical pill to make it go away as fast as possible. We just don't have the time to bother with long term change.

Now the excuses are already starting to come out again. I am too busy, my kids are off school, we are going out of town or on vacation and I don't want to get started until we get back or I am too stressed out to add one more thing to my calendar.

If you truly want to "transform" your body, then you can't, **I repeat you can't keep doing what you have always done.** You have to change it up. You can't snack on a whole bag of candy while you're sitting at your desk because you're bored or can't take out the time for lunch. Get up and take a walk, make yourself a sandwich for lunch and eat it while you're walking if you don't have much time.

Do you and your hubby, boyfriend, wife, cat or whatever else you curl up with on the couch and eat a bag of chips as you watch your favorite show together. Its habits like those that you're probably aren't even aware of. But think about it, isn't that how those pounds crept up on you in the first place?

Now back to the resolution, did you promise to give several things up? You can't stop cold turkey on everything and expect it to be long lasting. What do they say about forming a habit? You have to do or see something for 21 days to form a new habit and make it a part of your life. It's the consistent, repetitive action that forms that habit.

Success comes much easier to you when you create smaller goals that can be achieved in the short term. Setting smaller attainable goals will help and guide you toward that long term goal. You have to think about taking your goal of losing weight and breaking it down even further, to first deciding how much you can comfortably and safely lose in the time frame that you've given yourself. Well first of all, what is a comfortable, safe amount? 1 to 2 pounds a week is a safe amount to lose. Now how are you going to do this?

To make things simple lets shoot for losing 1 pound at a time. Of course this doesn't sound like a whole lot, but think about it, if you lost 1 pound every week for a year that would add up to 52 pounds lost. Not everyone may need to lose 52 pounds, but you get the picture. Throughout that year you will probably lose some pounds, gain some pounds and fall off that wagon every once in a while, but for the most part you will learn how to maintain your newly created healthy habits.

It really isn't that complicated to figure out how to lose that 1 pound though. Keep in mind that to burn 1 pound of fat, you have to burn 3500 calories more than what you normally use. Wow, that sounds like a lot, can you really do it, of course you can. But remember, we are talking about losing those 3500 calories over the course of a week, so you need to burn off an extra 500 calories a day for 7 days. That sounds a little more reasonable to me.

But even 500 calories a day can seem intimidating, especially if you're on that treadmill for twenty minutes sweating away and you look down and all you've burned off is about 80 calories. The good thing is the 500 calories can be a combination of a deficit of calories taken in (eaten) and calories burned off (exercise). What that means is you can work a little harder exercising and eat less calories to reach that daily goal.

Let's take a step back for a moment, I talk a lot about calories, but what is a calorie? To put it in simple terms a calorie is a unit of energy. It is the amount of energy contained in food. About 70% of the calories you use everyday are used to get you through life, meaning your body requires a certain number of calories to perform duties we take for granted; like breathing, the beating of your heart, the pumping of your blood through your body, everything that goes on in your body automatically without us even thinking about it requires energy. Another name for this that you may have heard before is resting metabolic rate (RMR).

So if you do nothing for a whole day and just sat still, your body would burn between 1200-1700 calories. Everyone burns energy at a different rate. So without getting technical, if your body burned 1200 calories just due to the mechanics of living and you eat 2000 calories in a day, then your body is going to store that additional 800 calories as fat if you do nothing in terms of expending those extra calories through exercise or additional daily tasks like getting up off that couch.

Bottom line – Burn more calories than you consume.

All it takes is to make small daily changes in your lifestyle. There is nothing magical about it and no drastic diets to follow. Here is a simple way to get started.

First, you need to calculate everything you eat in an average day; in fact I would do it for several days and then average it out, because if you only do one day, it will be the best day you've probably eaten healthy in a long time. Why do I say that? Because when you are conscious about writing it down you tend to eat better for that day.

Second, keep a tally of your daily exercise; you will be surprised how much you actually move around. Find a website that gives you a calorie count for daily activities.

So now that you've done the first two steps, you have a baseline. You can now increase your activity level and decrease how much you eat. Remember that you need to decrease your calories by 500 in order to lose that one pound. So that could mean taking an extra brisk walk for 30 minutes for about 150 calories and eating a granola bar instead of that bag of candy and add a possible 180 calories so those two activities alone just added to 330 calories less.

So you begin to get the idea just how easy it can be by changing the smallest of details to reach your goal for the week. You didn't have to starve yourself and feel like you can never eat your favorite foods again. The point I always try to get across to my clients is everything in moderation. Use the 90/10 rule; 90% of the time you eat healthy and 10% of the time, be bad if you need to. Combine that with exercise and you will succeed and reach your goals.