



BUCKLE UP!

By Judy Troth

Happy New Year! I am glad 2008 is behind us! Time to make a fresh start in the new year. Time to set some goals – and make plans to accomplish them! What do you want to accomplish for health and fitness? If you know what you want to do, how will you put it in motion? This month I'd like to help you get off to a great start, and in memory of our former president, we'll call them the 5 W's of fitness (to help you change).

What do you want to accomplish?

Is it weight loss, adding muscle mass, becoming more flexible, shaving time off your mile, or do you want to improve your golf game? Or do you have another ultimate goal in mind? You have no chance of achieving goals that have not been defined. Take some time TODAY and write down what you are going to accomplish this year. What is your timeframe? If you want to lose 50 lbs, obviously you will not get that done this week, or even this month. You should have some weekly goals to meet, as well as monthly goals. Setting goals is not designed to make you feel bad about yourself! Goals are ways to measure progress, and a great way to know if you need to tweak anything.

When will you begin your program, and when will you work out?

Obviously, the sooner you start your journey, the sooner you'll get there, but for many of us, it is unwise to jump in without your doctor's OK. Get cleared with your doctor to start your program; you don't want to hurt yourself. When during the day will you work out? I can promise you that if you don't schedule your work out time, it will not happen! Been there, done that – I work at a gym, for crying out loud – and if I don't schedule workout time, it does not get done. You need to begin to look at working out as a very important standing appointment (because it is important).

Where will you workout?

January is the time of year that Chuck Norris dusts off his Total Gym. Great idea, but in reality, most of us are simply not disciplined enough to work out at home. Outside is great if you

only do cardio – I walked outside for years and loved it, but the rain, heat and cold made me think twice about getting up many a morning! I think a gym is probably the best place for a couple of reasons- going somewhere to exercise puts you in the right frame of mind, and when you get there, there are other people working out too – it's a super way to get motivated!

Why should you work out?

Why shouldn't you? After all, exercise boosts your metabolism by building lean muscle mass and burning fat, lowers your blood pressure, regulates your blood sugar, helps reduce stress, lowers cholesterol, builds or helps maintain bone mass, and just makes you feel better. If all exercise did was make you feel better, wouldn't you want some of that? In addition, as we get older we become less flexible and have more problems with balance. A good training program can address those issues. Don't you want to live as well as possible for as long as you can? Regular exercise can help.

Who can help you?

Getting fit is not easy; most of us need some help, some motivation, maybe even some pushing. A partner can make things fun and challenging just because we are competitive beings. Classes are another way both to add variety to your workout and to find that other members like the camaraderie of "us vs. the instructor". Personal trainers offer the most intense help with your progress. Trainers aren't just about lifting weights; trainers can help with flexibility, core strength, balance issues, and muscle imbalances as well as muscle strength and cardiovascular endurance.

So, how about it?

Ready or not, here comes 2009! Let's get moving!

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