

Keep those New Year Resolutions by Mike DeCinti

Well if you're reading this article, today is the day after Christmas and although many of you may be thinking about returning that electric toothpaste dispenser or that green and red sweater with the silver garland of jingle bells sewn onto it, I'm willing to bet some of you are already starting to think about your New Year's resolutions.

I guess it's easy to understand why we all make New Year's resolutions. There's just something exciting about the thought of "starting over" on the first day of a new year. Even though we can (and should) make positive changes in our life on any day throughout the year, people tend to hold off until January 1st. However, this approach often times fails. Putting so much pressure on yourself by believing that you have to follow through with your resolutions this time or you'll be a failure, and thinking that if you don't do it now, you never will, often leads to disappointment. And if your resolutions deal with health and fitness, as they often do, letting another year go by without finally achieving your goals can have a much more serious effect than just disappointment.

So to help you make and stick to your fitness goals this year I wanted to give you five important tips that I recently came across at the website health-doc.com.

Be concrete- Instead of talking about things you'd like to do, talk about things that **WILL** happen. Use statements like "I'm going to have healthy family dinners together every evening." Or "I will eat my fruits and vegetables each day." Avoid talking about your resolutions using phrases that begin with statements such as "I'd like to..." or "Maybe I'll..." Using concrete terms will help you commit to the idea. It's a simple confidence building technique that will help you internalize your goals and achieve them.

Be Specific- Don't just set a goal of exercising more, but try setting a specific goal such as exercising every Monday, Wednesday and Friday before work for an hour. If your resolution is a bigger goal that will take more time, such losing 40 pounds, you need to map out all of the smaller goals that you need to accomplish along the way. Give yourself a timeframe for each of the small goals, such as losing 2 or 3 pounds per week, required to meet the long-term goal.

Set realistic goals- One of the biggest mistakes most people make is setting themselves up for failure. Achieving goals takes time and effort on your part. Things don't happen just because you thought of it, without putting the effort into it or giving it the proper time. If you set unrealistic goals, you will quickly become discouraged and likely stop pursuing them at all.

Write them down- Writing your New Year's Resolutions down seems rudimentary, but experts agree that the rate of success is greater if you do. Writing them down is another form of commitment that starts the ball rolling to help you become successful. Post your

list in a prominent location where you're sure to see it, or make a few copies and post them around the house, at work or even in the car.

Tell everyone you know- This is probably my favorite idea, but one that takes the most courage. However to succeed you need courage. One of the worst mistakes you can make is to not tell anyone of your goals. By telling people, you are setting yourself up for success. Each and every person you tell will hopefully be rooting for you and will probably check up on your progress. Whether your goal is to eat healthy, exercise regularly, or spend more time with loved ones, you will always be questioned on your progress and your friends and family will share in your success right along with you, creating another measure of accountability.

Bottom line is that we are all about to witness the start to a brand new year and with it a clean slate. You can become an entirely new person with no questions asked. In 2008 you can say goodbye to the person that didn't take care of themselves, didn't care about their health and wellness, or always quit and you can finally become the person that decides to get healthy, stay healthy and never quit. And even though you could have made this decision yesterday, or last week you now have the perfect opportunity to make one of the most important changes in your life at exactly the first second of the first minute of the first hour of the first day of the new year. Good luck!