



Stick To It



BODY BY DAN

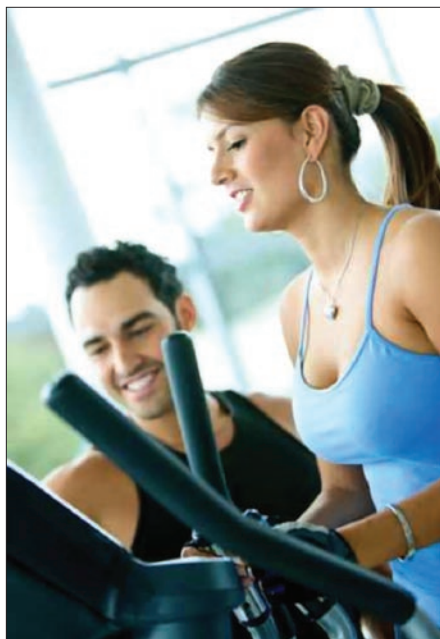
How many of you are still working on your New Year's resolution? Better yet, how many of you are still working towards the fitness goals you set for yourself two years ago? That's what I thought. I know it's difficult. You know, a big problem with our culture today—especially the younger demographic—is that we tend to focus on instant gratification. If we can't accomplish our goals quickly, or the first time around, we tend to give up and think "it's not meant to be" or "it's not worth the effort."

This line of thinking is proven ridiculous when you look back at history. For example, Abraham Lincoln (widely revered as one of the greatest presidents in history) failed to be elected to multiple political offices before finally being elected as President of the United States. Many professional and Olympic athletes have repeatedly failed before achieving great success. Reaching any goal in your life takes discipline, perseverance, and hard work—so why should you look at your health goals any differently? In my opinion, one of the most important goals is to improve your health so you can function more efficiently and live a long and healthy life for your family.

With all that being said, it is entirely possible that you don't prescribe to the notion of instant gratification, and have stopped trying to achieve your health goals for other reasons. I understand that you may have set your standards too high, becoming unmotivated when your results seem to stall. If you're in this boat, please recognize that in fitness there are always "plateaus" that our bodies reach. The human body has a remarkable ability to adapt to stressors put on it. In order to break your plateaus, you have to do one or more of the following things: improve your nutrition, increase the workload put on your body, and vary your exercise routine.

If all you do is walk on a stair-stepper three

days a week, for three months—your body is going to become one mean stair climber and become so efficient at it that you may stop losing weight. If you have been doing the same routine for over eight weeks, it's about time for you to change your



program. If you have been doing primarily cardiovascular workouts, switch to weight-training for four weeks, or simply add it to your routine if you have the time. If you have been doing metabolic weight training with minimal rest intervals as a form of losing weight, then switch to running for four weeks or add it to your routine twice a week. If you only exercise for thirty minutes three times a week, increase it to forty minutes three times a week, or thirty minutes four times a week. Variation, progression, and overload are key for continual improvements and for the avoidance of plateaus.

Putting these concepts into action will not immediately make you lose fifty more pounds. This will take hard work, discipline, and perseverance on your part. In fact, if you vary your routine it may even seem overly difficult at first because your body has yet to adapt. That's a good thing! Challenge yourself, and challenge your body. Of course there will be some days when you will just want to give up, and there will be days that you perceive no visible improvement—these are the most important days and weeks to persevere because they will harden your mental resolve! So please, get back to working on your fitness and health goals, and just stick to it. You WILL reap the rewards of your hard work, and when you do, you will be extraordinarily happy that you stuck to it.

"Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them—every day begin the task anew."—Saint Francis de Sales

This advice is excellent. If you are able to begin each day with renewed focus and courage toward completing your goals, you will be well on your way to achieving them.

As always, I recommend that you counsel with a physician before embarking on any new or improved exercise program. If you have any questions, please see your local personal trainer—most of them won't bite, I promise. Best wishes on achieving your goals and persevering through those unmotivated times.