



FITNESS CHOICES TO START THE NEW YEAR

By Phillip Melchers

It starts on January 1st. It is a time of great optimism, nothing but expectation and an arsenal of goals. It's a time to start eating better, to be healthier, it's time, perhaps, to even start going to the gym. A familiar story, I'm sure some would say, though most know how it ends. February 1st, the winter Blues, couches and potato chips, suddenly January's optimism fades and coming next is that final phrase, "where did I end up going wrong?"

Let's back up. Every New Year's resolution begins with motivation, the force that drives the promise. This is good. Having motivation is good, important even, but not enough. Often, failure comes from simply being unprepared, or unknowledgeable. Luckily, three local personal trainers are here to help, offering their opinions and expertise on how, not just to get to the gym, but to keep coming back as well.

The first step is in knowing how to plan goals. "Make it a lifestyle," says Brad Toupin, a trainer at XTR Fitness and Sports

Centre. "Know what you want, set a goal, reach that goal, and set a new goal." In setting goals, most trainers will advise against goals that seem shallow. Body improvement goes beyond burning off the holiday bulge, a common mistake that leads to clients "yo-yoing." Another problem with shallow goals is that they create too much expectation in too little time. For example, as Katie Ball, a trainer at Four Season Family Fitness, reminds us, "[weight] goes on a lot faster than it comes off." Additionally she adds, "Don't let a scale discourage you, just because it's not moving doesn't mean you aren't being healthier." Think progressively, she encourages, and focus on the smaller changes at first. In quoting Mark Breyer, owner and trainer at HUA functional fitness, "the hill is always harder to climb... at first. The first few months are tough."

Another mistake to avoid is the temptation to jump right in. Instead, don't be afraid to trial your options. One of the benefits to personal training is that a trainer will learn their client, and choose

the exercise that best suits their needs. For example Katie, aside from regular fitness, specializes in pre and post natal fitness, whereas Mark is more focused on weight training in general. As Brad states, "do what works for you."

Finally, once it is time to start, the next step is to keep going. This is where motivation is most needed. Try asking yourself the important questions. For example, as Mark suggests, "What in the past has gotten you here today?" or simply, "Why am I here?" Know that you can change, that you want to change. "Do not get discouraged," warns Katie, "you will eventually start to enjoy it." If self motivation doesn't work, then know there is a social aspect to the gym as well. Find or make friends that will force you to go. A gym is a social space; use it to your advantage. Remember your goals: don't aim for only temporary change, aim for lifestyle change.

If a personal trainer isn't your forte, there are still plenty of local options to choose from. For example, within Brockville, there is Curves, Good Life Fitness, or the YMCA. The benefit to a personal trainer however is having someone who is beside you and committed. For anyone new, this is a great advantage. Most personal trainers look forward to the relationships they have with their clients, feeling proud when they see them develop. As our local community continues to grow, there seems to be an influx of personal trainers coming in. With so many options, why not make this year the year to finally beat the February blues. [LH](#)