



CanadaAM Shape Up Fitness Blog

You may consider making New Year's Resolutions a futile exercise, however in the words of Oprah Winfrey, "Cheers to a New Year and another chance for us to get it right!"

Far too often, we end up making a long list of lofty resolutions without clear commitment and direction. Various sources show that about 50% fall off the wagon by week 4 and less than 20% follow through to the end of the year.

So why don't resolutions work? The top 3 reasons for failure identified consistently are lack of discipline; lack of time; and caving to cravings!

Instead of giving up on making resolutions, why not learn to make more effective ones that help you blast through those barriers! Use the fresh start feeling of January but apply more specific goal-setting practices to help increase your chances of success. After all, people who explicitly make resolutions are **10 times more likely to attain their goals** than people who don't.

Try these 6 secrets to help make your resolutions stick!

1. Get Real, Get Specific

The more specific you are with your goal, the easier it will be to see, feel and achieve. Start with a general goal and then ask yourself questions that help you make it more specific and real – what it that look like, how will you feel, what will you be able to do differently. From there, you can identify a more tangible goal and attach a timeline. This can also help you distinguish practical pursuit from wishful thinking.

RESOLUTION MAKEOVER:

Been there, done that...

"I want to get in shape this year"

The problem with that...

This is far too vague. Does it mean looking like a swimsuit model or competing in an iron man race? With no benchmarks, measures or time, you're setting yourself for failure.

Making it stick...

Here's an example of starting with a general health goal and making it more specific. This can be done with any of your fitness goals. Your measures can be anything from using a scale, a tape measure, lifting a certain weight or fitting into your favourite clothes.

- Make is specific – I want to improve my cardiovascular health
- Make it meaningful – I will increase my cardio strength and endurance
- My benchmark – I currently can't run for 5 minutes without fatigue



2. Follow a Realistic Training Program

Although there is a lot of science and technology in fitness programming, when you're starting or returning to fitness – KISS! The most important thing first is to establish the habit of activity. Once you're used to the routine, gradually increase the time, intensity and complexity of your routine. This will give you time to increase your confidence and stamina and help you avoid injury and burn-out.

RESOLUTION MAKEOVER:

Been there, done that... I'm going to join a gym

The problem with that...

Very often, people don't factor in the additional time involved in going to a gym – commuting, showing, waiting for equipment. This can result in over-commitment and frustration, making it too easy to skip.

Making it stick...

"No pain, no gain" simply isn't (always) true. Yes, exercise can be challenging but when it's fun and comfortable you end up looking forward to it as a regular part of your day.

- Assess your schedule and identify how much time you REALISTICALLY have to start and then figure out a way to best use that time
- Make a list of activities that you enjoy or might like to try – find something close and fun
- Track your workouts – on your computer, phone or hard copy calendar
- EASE into it initially and then gradually increase your time and intensity

3. Break it Down

Having a larger, specific goal is important however it can also feel like a daunting task when you're standing at the start line! Breaking them down into mini goals with timelines is a great way to help you stay motivated along the way.

RESOLUTION MAKEOVER:

Been there, done that... I'm going to lose 20 lbs

The problem with that... Too much to think of!

Making it stick...

- Start with your overall goal and a realistic time
- Set mini goals at regular intervals to make it more manageable and gradual
 - lose 20 lbs by summer
 - lose 15 lbs by May 1st
 - lose 10 lbs by March 20th
 - lose 5 lbs by Feb 10th
- If you end up reaching 10 or 15 and stopping – you've succeeded 3 times and it may be by choice NOT to continue to the full 20! You may feel fabulous and energetic at 15!



4. Let Your Goals Evolve

Once you start changing, your goals may also change so you definitely want to keep them in sand versus stone.

RESOLUTION MAKEOVER:

Been there, done that...

this isn't working!

The problem with that...

it's an all or nothing venture

Making it stick...

First, keep your progression gradual – shoot for a fun run of 2k or 5 k and then look at a 10k for next year. You may also started with the idea of walking or jogging only to find group exercise more your speed – kickboxing and dancing your way to fitness and health. Allowing for flexibility ensures your goals keep up with you!

- You may find you aren't losing weight but losing inches – THIS should definitely be the better benchmark (as you may be adding muscle mass and losing fat...either way, you look and feel great)
- That 5K may turn into a 10K
- A goal of working out 15 minutes could turn into 40!
- Working out at the club 4 times a week may not fit into your schedule, so then modify and go 2 times, but supplement with 2 activity sessions at home – walking, calisthenics, basketball in the driveway, going tobogganing WITH your kids!

5. Reward Yourself

Reward yourself for successful workouts, weeks and/or or your mini goals. Each step forward is a success, so use this when you need a boost with your motivation – working out on days you really didn't feel like it or for plugging through plateaus!

RESOLUTION MAKEOVER:

Been there, done that...

food or skipping workouts!

Making it stick...

- Use healthy indulgences
 - time to yourself
 - new workout gear
 - spa treatments – at home or out!
- KEY POINT TO REMEMBER – if you've been sedentary, you'll see more improvement up front. As you get more fit, the progress gets slower, but those small changes are still worth celebrating because they require a lot of effort!



6. Surround Yourself With Support & Resources

Changing habits is a challenge, so whether you're joining a group or learning a new sport you'll do solo, make sure you surround yourself with support and resources you need for success.

RESOLUTION MAKEOVER:

Been there, done that...

out with friends at a pub surrounded by wings and beer when you've vowed to eat healthy!

The problem with that...

it's a constant challenge to your motivation and resolve!

Making it stick...

- Tell your friends and family and ASK SPECIFICALLY FOR SUPPORT
 - unfortunately, studies show family and friends can sabotage your efforts which may be from a place of love...but NOT helpful
- Take the lead – invite friends and family to walk, to try healthy recipes
- Find resources – there are so many options for information, tools and support
 - online – always check the sources, but there are some great sites
 - friends who already workout
 - find a fitness friend – to workout with, be accountable to
 - classes – they're a great way to get positive reinforcement AND find accountability as you'll be missed if you miss a class!
 - there's an app for that! Check out apps that are free or a nominal fee, there are some GREAT options and the best part – it travels with you wherever you go!

Remember once again, people who explicitly make resolutions are **10 times more likely to attain their goals** than people who don't.

For ongoing support and tips for your New Year's Resolutions, visit www.libbynorris.com. We'll be posting fit tips, home exercise outlines and recipes and tips to keep you on track!

Coming January 15th ...Time-Efficient Training!

If you don't have a lot of extra time, make every minute work. Check out our new online training tool that gives you the following tools with the click of your mouse:

- home self-assessment – a guided process that uses Olympic training technology
- a comprehensive summary of results and what they mean for your health and program
- a completely personalized program in minutes based on YOUR goals, YOUR time and YOUR equipment whether at home or at the gym!
- online tools, videos, support and information