

Anew January 2010 Newsletter

10 Essential Tools for Jump Starting your Wellness Program Today

It's hard to ignore the refreshing feeling a New Year brings. It tends to feel like a new beginning and an opportunity for a fresh start. It's a chance to re-evaluate your life and think about where you might like to make changes. Many times you start energetically determined to revamp your health and lifestyle.

Starting with enthusiasm and hope, you watch your food intake diligently and exercise like it is going out of style. Then certain tragedy strikes! You eat an extra piece of birthday cake. Realizing you have "blown" your diet, you eat another and another and can't seem to snap out of it the next day either. Or worse, you miss one workout, and that turns into a whole week away from the gym. After that, your momentum to start over again is gone, and your gym bag hasn't left the closet since.

Every time you misstep on your healthy journey, you have two choices: to keep walking backwards, which will surely take you even further away from your goals; or to accept your lack of perfection as normal and forgivable, and take not one, but two positive steps down the path that brings you closer to the future you want.

If you're reading this, you might have been walking backwards for a while. But instead of waiting for the next day, week, month or even year to overhaul your habits, start TODAY. And start small. You can't go from the couch to a 5K or from pizza to steamed broccoli in one day. But you can do one, two or even a handful of small things that will help you regain your momentum for healthy living.

It's never too late to begin your journey in wellness! When you feel like getting back on track is overwhelming, consider these tools below to help you kick start 2010!

1. **Write out your goals and desires.** Set your wellness vision. Where do you envision yourself three to five months from now? This is your destination. If you were going on vacation you'd first have to figure out where you want to go so you will know what to pack. Your wellness vision is the big picture, which you will then break down into small manageable steps and goals. I encourage my clients to set weekly or even bi-weekly goals that you will be able to stay focused on. Goals should be **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-based, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-oriented.
2. **Find your true motivation** that is driving the desire for change. Is it just the weight coming off or maybe the increased self esteem too and the confidence that you envisioning for yourself if you feel more comfortable with your clothes.
3. **Identify your obstacles.** Make a list of the hurdles that seem to inhibit your progress. What and who has or has not been in your way to sticking to wellness program? Truly look at the list and determine which of these hurdles are real obstacles

and which ones are just excuses. Let go of the excuses and focus your energy to find solutions and strategies to overcome the true obstacles.

4. **Plan your Strategy.** So now you have your longer term wellness vision, your shorter term weekly goals, solutions for any obstacles that you might encounter, and that strong motivation that drives you every day. All these tools together will help you lay out a plan for accomplishing your goals. This game plan is your road map to getting from where you are to where you need to be.

5. **Begin your journey where you are now.** Where are you right now, this moment, today. Many times we dwell on all that we are not or have not done and allow that burden to intimidate us. “If I haven’t lost the weight by now, why would I be successful this time?” Or “if I have never been able to stick to a workout schedule why bother?” Try to forget all this background noise and accept yourself where you are today. Any change you make forward will make you that much more confident towards reaching your wellness goals.

6. **There is nothing wrong with starting small.** Many times we think we can go from standing still to full speed in an instant and big changes will happen. That is not a very realistic approach and often leads to disappointment. You can’t expect to jump in the middle of something and be up to speed right away. When just starting out, instead of obsessing about becoming a tri-athlete, , aim to just visit the gym 3x a week or run for 15 minutes and not a whole hour. Small little achievable steps will give you some instant success and satisfaction of accomplishment encouraging you to do more and stick to the plan!

7. **Stop comparing yourself to others.** We’re bombarded by images of “perfect” bodies every day. It’s easy to get caught up in all of it and feel as though we’ll never measure up, and chances are, we won’t. Let’s get real! These images are results of computer imagery, great lighting, professional make-up artists, self-starvation, plastic surgery and some extra air brushing to catch any imperfections they might have missed. Stop comparing yourself to a fantasy and just be the best that you can be.

8. **Learn from your setbacks.** When obstacles still arise and you experience failure or find yourself detouring from the plan, remember that you are human. No-one is perfect and no plan is perfect. Life happens every day and while we have anticipated and prepared ourselves for these hurdles, it doesn’t mean that everything will go as planned. That is why by the way it is important to stay flexible with the whole process. So when things don’t go as planned, rather than beating yourself down about the setback, try to learn from it. Accept it, learn from it and move on. There is no point on getting down day after day or paying the price week after week for a setback you had once.

9. **Celebrate your successes.** Just as if you blunder you shouldn’t dwell on it, conversely, you can dwell all you want on your successes! Acknowledge and celebrate you sticking to your plan, getting those workouts in, not skipping breakfast and drinking

your water! I encourage my clients to reward themselves for their accomplishments, no matter how small they might be. A date at the movies, a new outfit, a bubble bath, a massage or anything that you might consider a little treat, as long as it contributes to your wellbeing.

10. **Start a journal.** Journal your whole experience. Try to jot not just the tangible goals, obstacles, solutions and workout routine, but also the intangible; Your desires, your thoughts, your feelings, your fears and dreams through this journey. Journaling raises further awareness around your habits for both body and mind, enhances the learning process and helps in demystifying other behaviors such as negative chatter that might be always turned on. Use it to let out your feelings, vent, rejoice, or celebrate. You'll be amazed at how freeing it is!

No matter what you do, remember to enjoy the experience. This is Your journey, your experience not your neighbor's! Many times we focus on the destination so much that we forget to enjoy the journey itself. If you need further assistance and support contact me for a health consultation or consider joining one of our Nutrition and Lifestyle Programs.

To your Health
Dina Boyer