



Dear Friends,

A new year is upon us, which means a fresh start, a new you, and the chance to become that energetic, fresh faced person in all those health magazines (I'm convinced it's the same woman!).

Except, I don't know about you, but often my best intentions end up being...well, just that, 'good intentions'. So how do we follow through and use our post-holiday sense of motivation (read; guilt) to effect a long-term change in our behaviour?

Well, regardless of whether our goals are personal or professional, taking the time to develop a clear strategy will undoubtedly help;

That's why this year it's time to get
SMART and FITT.

Your New Year's resolution must be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-framed to stand any chance of success.

That means being clear as to whether we want to lose weight in order to look good on the beach this summer, or in order to take up our favourite sport again (**Specific**). Both equally valid, but each will require a slightly different approach.

Also, when we set out on a journey, it's important to know how you're going to recognise your destination, or you'll never know whether you've arrived. So ask yourself, "How will I know when I've achieved my aim?" (The **Measure** of your success)

Deciding whether your goal is **Achievable** will mean being honest with yourself, but it pays to be conservative, you can always go one better next year!

Pen ultimately, is it **Realistic** to expect to give up smoking this year knowing that you've got that major review at work in 6 weeks time (stress), followed by the big house move come the Spring (über-stress)?

Finally, a **Time-frame** will allow us to break goals down into manageable chunks that will allow us to monitor progress and keep you motivated.

Take Phil Siddall as a case in point (you can read Phil's full story in February's edition of 'Runners World'). At the age of 36, Phil weighed over 27 stone and was diagnosed with Type II diabetes (a weight-related illness). The diagnosis, and a chance meeting with an old school friend (who happened to be a personal trainer), made him realise it was time to act.

Ironically, it would be his extreme weight that was his greatest ally, as he was forced to formulate realistic goals.

Phil started gradually with regular walks; it would be a month and a half before he tackled his first 'wog' (a combined walk and jog; two miles in 54 minutes).

Still, out of little acorns...and six months later he'd completed his first 10k race, and what's more, he did it in the same time he'd managed that first 'Wog'; 54 minutes!



Don't underestimate the power of regular walks to your fitness regime;
The author with, 'The best (and hairiest) exercise equipment money can buy'

A year later Phil entered the Great North Run and came away with a very impressive sub-two hour time. Phil accredits the following factors to his success;

- ◆ Phil's Weight loss Secret: Get a personal trainer



well we'd hardly disagree would we!

- ◆ Phil's Weight loss Secret: Start the week with a hard run



This will set you up for the week; you'll need something (an MP3 player) or someone (a running partner/trainer) to motivate you to run harder than normal.

- ◆ Phil's Weight loss Secret: Exercise with others



With others as a distraction and an element of competition its amazing how much harder you work (try a midweek gym class).

- ◆ Phil's Weight loss Secret: Keep a Food Diary



A must! You'll be amazed by those hidden calories (20 spoonfuls of sugar in your coffee over the course of the week, and 'I couldn't possibly have drunk 4ltrs of wine...could I?')

- ◆ Phil's Weight loss Secret: Invest in a Heart Rate Monitor



A HR Monitor is an ideal way to make sure training is of the right intensity (the 'I' in FITT) and when you run the same route in the same time with a lower average HR you'll know that your aerobic fitness has improved.

In summary, New Year resolutions are often just too dramatic and vague to ever be sustainable. But if, like Phil, we set specific, realistic targets, and are able to monitor and refine them, this time next year you'll be patting yourself on the back and deciding what you're going to make short work of in 2009.

"But what about the FITT mnemonic!" I hear you cry in unison. I hadn't forgotten, but Frequency, Intensity, Type and Time of training sessions makes for very dry reading and is for me, as your personal trainer, to worry about!

Of course if you're really interested and want to know more, just ask, and I'll be happy to sit down and talk you through it...make that happy to walk and talk you through it!

All the Best and good luck whatever your goals maybe this year!

Laura