



The Pilates Connection Weight Loss Challenge

NEWSLETTER

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THIS WEEK'S TOPIC...

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE POSITIVE

Picture Yourself In a Positive Light

-By Mike Kramer, Staff Writer, SparkPeople.com

If you put yourself in a positive frame of mind, you can accomplish anything. If you can clearly see your goal, see that it's within your grasp, there's nothing stopping you. That's why surrounding yourself with positive images and visual reminders can be just what the doctor ordered.

You may already have an inner voice telling you that you can do it, that you can reach your goal. But sometimes, that inner voice could be distracted, a little discouraged or even intimidated. Sometimes, it lacks conviction. Sometimes, you need an external voice telling you the same thing, reinforcing your confidence and determination.

Think about what might happen without that positive reinforcement. Suppose you had a parrot sitting on your shoulder, cackling in your ear all day long that your efforts are useless, that you will never reach your goal. Or suppose that every day, you were faced with a taunting picture of you looking your god-awful, embarrassing worst. Sounds pretty discouraging, doesn't it?

Surrounding yourself with negativity will drain the energy, life and hope right out of you like a leech. Seems pretty obvious, but too often, we allow these negative messages to seep through.

Thankfully, the opposite is just as true. One of the quickest ways to boost your spirits and keep motivation high is to keep a positive picture of your goal close by. A picture or other visual of your ultimate goal is a huge motivator. Having it around all the time is a voice of encouragement whispering in your ear, helping you stay focused on the prize and energized to overcome any obstacle.

Everyone runs into a wall at some point. You're not alone if you feel discouraged. To keep it from happening, or to deal with it if it does, try these ideas:

- Use positive images. Find a visual that shows why you want to get healthy in the first place, or what you'll be doing after you reach your goal. A picture of your family, the new dress you want to wear, or a basketball.
- Use positive words. Keep notes of encouragement with you or choose a few favorite inspirational words. You can get plenty of these words on the Message Boards.
- Use positive books and movies. Watch and read positive things that show you what's possible. Trade your favorites with friends. Find a hero and try to adapt their qualities to your journey.
- Use positive quotes. Check out our [quote library](#), or keep some inspirational quote books handy. They could give you that lift right when you need it most. Choose one as your personal motto and plaster it everywhere.
- Use positive music. Let music that makes you feel good become the background theme of your life.

With a visual nearby, your goal is right there. It's clear what you want. It's clearly within your grasp. You have the power to reach out and just take it.

DIETING WITH A POSITIVE TWIST

Advice from SparkGuy

-By Chris Downie, SparkPeople.com

Quick, when you think of the word 'diet,' what pops into your mind? Someone hovering over an all-lettuce salad, using a stopwatch to count the time until the next permitted bite? If this sounds familiar, then it's important to know that this is *not* the way to get healthy. In fact, it's the complete opposite; getting healthy is fun!

For many of us, getting healthy means giving up all the foods we like to eat and starving ourselves for long stretches throughout the day. Of course that would not be a pleasant experience. If you are dreading each day while you are on a so-called 'diet,' then what's the point? Getting healthy, though, has to do with much more than eating right – it's about simple things that you will enjoy.

Every little bit counts; even activities that you think have nothing to do with your health count. Walking around the neighborhood, talking to friends and family on the phone, setting goals, reading - these are all activities that will help you in your quest to get healthier, all while keeping you positive.

Sure, you may have to watch out for some foods in your diet, but it's more important to simply incorporate healthy foods – fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates – into what you eat. At the same time, exercise does not have to be a rigorous, three-hour workout. The key is finding exercise you enjoy, such as playing racquetball, riding a bike or throwing a football.

And that's just the point – getting healthy is something to enjoy, not to detest. Getting

healthy is not something you should look at as a chore; it's something that can be a fun and great experience. It can be a positive experience that will not be a short-lived fad, but a new way of life for you.

MAKE SOMEDAY TODAY!

RECIPE

SLOW COOKER VEGETABLE MINISTRONE

- 4 cups vegetable broth or 1 carton (32 oz) Progresso® chicken broth
- 4 cups tomato juice
- 1 tablespoon dried basil leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 medium carrots, sliced (1 cup)
- 2 medium celery stalks, chopped (1 cup)
- 1 medium onion, chopped (1/2 cup)
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms (3 oz)
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 can (28 oz) Muir Glen® organic diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked rotini pasta (4 1/2 oz)
- Shredded Parmesan cheese, if desired

1. In 4- to 5-quart slow cooker, mix all ingredients except pasta and cheese.
2. Cover; cook on Low heat setting 7 to 8 hours or until vegetables are tender.
3. Stir in pasta. Cover; cook on High heat setting 15 to 20 minutes or until pasta is tender. Sprinkle each serving with cheese.

Nutritional Information

12 Servings. Calories 90 (Calories from Fat 0); Total Fat 0g, Total Carbohydrate 18g, Protein 3g

Exchanges: 1/2 Other Carbohydrate; 2 Vegetable

Recipe from eatbetteramerica.com

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