



The Pilates Connection Weight Loss Challenge

NEWSLETTER

April 12, 2010

Looking for a past newsletter or recipes? [Clear here to access the archive!](#)

Thank you to everybody who came out to walk with us in the Walk For The Cure last Sunday; and to everybody who donated to our team. We all got the 5K in within an hour and it was a beautiful morning to raise money for a great cause.

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC...

3 SIMPLE WAYS TO BUILD CONSISTENCY

Because Consistency Is the Key to Success!

-by Dean Anderson, Fitness & Behavior Expert, SparkPeople.com

You don't have to be an expert to figure out that consistency is pretty essential to successfully change your life, your health, and your weight. But it's also pretty clear that building a consistent routine of regular exercise and healthy eating is not an easy thing to do.

You start off the day with the best intentions—to exercise, track all your food, and make healthy choices. But then life happens. One of the kids is sick, the babysitter is late, the snowplow blocked your driveway, the boss asks you to work overtime, or any one of a hundred other surprises that can really wreck your day. Before you know it, your plan is in trouble and your prospects for "sticking to it" aren't looking very good. In fact, things are probably going to get worse as the day goes on. By the end of the day, you have no energy left for exercise, and the task of preparing a healthy meal feels like a big burden when what you really want is a break. Something has to give.

More often than not, "what gives" is your plan to exercise and eat right. When it's hard to do everything, the things most likely to go undone are those that don't affect or involve anyone but you—especially if those things aren't exactly your favorite things to do anyway.

So how do you change this pattern? With the **three rules for building consistency**.

These three simple rules, when followed faithfully, will make it easier for you to be consistent with your healthy lifestyle habits—even on the toughest days.

Rule #1: Never tell yourself “I’m not motivated.”

That’s not the real problem, unless you really don’t want to lose weight or live a healthy lifestyle. As long as you do *want* these things, you have all the motivation you need.

It may be true that sometimes you don’t want to exercise, or that you really want to stop and get fast food rather than cooking dinner. That’s understandable, but it doesn’t mean you’re not motivated. *It just means that you want two different and opposing things, and you have to make a decision.* Telling yourself that you lack motivation is just a way of denying that you really do have a choice. It makes the problem seem mysterious and out of your control, and it makes you feel less powerful than you really are, because you lack something (the motivation) you need. Not true!

In the long run you’ll do better if you *acknowledge that the choice is yours* to make. You can choose either option, without making excuses or inventing a theory like “lack of motivation” to justify it. Then, pay attention to how you feel about the choice you made, and decide whether that is how you want to feel most of the time.

Being consistent does not mean being perfect. (There are going to be days when you decide to do something other than stick to your exercise and diet routine, and that’s fine.) But *becoming consistent does mean giving yourself the power to choose.*

Rule #2: Build momentum one step at a time.

It’s never easy to change old habits or start new routines. Studies show that it takes anywhere from 21 to 40 days to really turn a new behavior into a persistent habit. And during that time, you’re going to have to work at it pretty diligently—even when you don’t feel like it.

The key to long term consistency is building momentum. The hardest part is always getting things started. But once you’re moving, staying in motion and picking up speed becomes a lot easier. There are a lot of ways you can gradually build momentum during those first few weeks. Here are some examples:

- Start with something that’s pretty easy to manage and build up from there. Set a goal of one 10-minute exercise session per week. Then increase it to two 10-minute sessions. Gradually add minutes to each workout (and eventually add one or more additional workouts to your week), until you’re exercising as long and as frequently as you should in order to reach your goals. The simple act of setting aside some time for exercise every day, no matter how little, and sticking to it is enough to start building the habit.
- Find an accountability buddy—someone who knows about your plan and is willing to give you a push when you feel like slacking off. It’s always harder to let someone else down than it is to let yourself off the hook.
- Employ an excuse buster. Find a friend, family member, or SparkPeople member whose judgment and opinion you respect. Each time you find yourself thinking about skipping an exercise session or blowing your meal plan, write down the reason for your choice. Share this reason with your excuse buster and get her honest opinion about whether the reason for your choice is reasonable or just an excuse. You’ll probably find that this makes it a lot harder for you to believe your own rationalizations.

Rule #3: Always have a plan B.

Because life is unpredictable and complicated, you need to have plan B ready—even before you actually need it. Plan B is an alternative way to stay consistent with your goals when your regular routine (or something else) doesn't work out as planned. Obviously, you can't foresee every single problem that might come up. But most of the time, the things that get in your way are things that happen fairly often—like kids getting sick, extra hours at work, or days when you just don't feel very energetic. Those surprises won't throw you off track if you plan ahead. For example, have a friend or family member lined up to stay with your kids so you can make it to the gym; stock your freezer with some healthy meals when you're short on time; stash your exercise clothes at the office for a quick workout when you can't get away.

Put a little time into identifying the most common problems that disrupt your healthy routine, and plan (in advance) what you can do to handle these problems without sacrificing your diet and exercise routine. Then all you'll have to do is put your plan B into action.

Following these three simple rules will help you overcome some common obstacles while building the momentum you need to stay consistent. At the very least, you'll be able to take all those lemons that life hands you, and make some good (and diet-friendly) lemonade out of them.

Weight Loss Challenge Winner of the Week:

Last week's winner was Fran McCarty. She lost 1.98%! Way to go Fran...enjoy your two free classes!

RECIPES

GRAIN AND VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

- 2 medium carrots, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced
- 1 can (14.5 oz) Muir Glen® organic diced or stewed tomatoes, undrained
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 can (15 oz) Progresso® black beans, drained, rinsed
- 1 cup Cascadian Farm® frozen whole kernel corn (from 10-oz bag)
- 1/2 cup vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup uncooked pearl barley
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup uncooked bulgur
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Shredded Cheddar cheese, if desired
- Sliced green onions, if desired

1. Heat oven to 350°F. In ungreased 2-quart casserole or 13x9-inch (2-quart) glass baking dish, mix all ingredients except cheese and green onions.
2. Cover with foil; bake 30 minutes. Stir. Cover and bake 30 to 35 minutes longer or until barley and bulgur are tender and liquid is absorbed.
3. To serve, sprinkle with cheese and green onions

Servings 4. 360 Calories, 3.5 Starches, 2 Vegetables, 4 g. Fiber

NO-BAKE APPLE BARS

Great snack for mid-morning or afternoon! Everyone's favorite recipe.

- 1 1/2 cups dried apples, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 3 cups Whole Grain Total® cereal
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup apple butter
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup old-fashioned or quick-cooking oats
- 1/4 cup dry-roasted sunflower nuts

1. Line bottom and sides of 8-inch square pan with foil; spray foil with cooking spray. Sprinkle 1/2 cup of the apples over bottom of pan. Place cereal in resealable food-storage plastic bag; seal bag and coarsely crush with rolling pin or meat mallet. Set aside.
2. In 4-quart Dutch oven, heat 1/2 cup of the apples, the honey, raisins and brown sugar to boiling over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to medium. Cook uncovered about 1 minute, stirring constantly, until hot and bubbly; remove from heat.
3. Stir peanut butter into cooked mixture until melted. Stir in apple butter and cinnamon. Stir in oats and sunflower nuts until well mixed. Stir in crushed cereal.
4. Press mixture very firmly (or bars will crumble) and evenly onto apples in pan. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup apples and the pecans; press lightly into bars. Refrigerate about 2 hours or until set. For bars, cut into 4 rows by 3 rows. Store covered in refrigerator.

Servings 12. 210 Calories, 2 Starches, 1 Fat, 4 g. Fiber.

Recipes from eatbetteramerica.com.

Contact us by email: pilatesconnection@cox.net
Or click on the logo below to visit our website.



*Northeast Corner, Broadway and Camino Seco
8767 East Broadway
Tucson, AZ 85710
Phone: 520-207-6121*

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).
Questions or comments? Email us at pilatesconnection@cox.net or call (520) 207-6121.