

A Active Image

Building the Foundation for a Healthier You!

“Seven Habits of Highly Effective Exercisers”

Over the last 10 years of training clients, I have noticed consistent patterns in those that have achieved success in their fitness programs. I have defined success as the ability to reach your goals and to be satisfied with your fitness program. Hopefully these common traits will allow you to look at your existing program and see if it can be enhanced.

CONSISTENCY: Those who have achieved results in their program, exercise regularly and consistently -- they don't look on missed sessions as failures but simply resume their program. They have made exercise a habit -- a part of their lifestyle that they continue when they are on vacation and even when they don't really feel like it.

MODERATION: For many of us the "M" word is not a favourite! We are passionate about our lives, our interests and pursuits (and maybe even chocolate!) and want to throw ourselves into our latest activity. However, like everything else exercise should be done in moderation (am I starting to sound like your mother?). Even exercising too intensely can cause injury or at the very least become tedious.

DISCIPLINE: This word has even worse connotations than the "M" word! However, discipline goes hand in hand with consistency. Making exercise a habit ... a priority -- written in your daytimer, makes it a planned part of your day. When you MAKE time to exercise, it helps you start your day, relieve stress and remain focused. This should not be a negative thing -- you're doing something good for yourself!

LEAD AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE: Studies show that people who lead active lifestyles are more likely to achieve better weight loss results than those who exercise 3 times per week but are otherwise sedentary. It is easy to believe that they are happier and enjoy better self-esteem as well. And don't forget that active lifestyles are FUN!!! Oh sure, some of us are probably not too crazy about climbing stairs, but walking can be enjoyable. What about other recreational and leisure activities such as dancing, playing baseball, riding a bike, fencing and even gardening ... and vacations!!! ... well you get the idea! As the ad says: *"JUST DO IT!"*

LIVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE: Exercise is very important, but is only one piece of the puzzle. The other components include: a healthy balanced diet (with room for occasional indulgences); a non-smoking lifestyle; keeping spiritually healthy ; involvement in the community; having a supportive network of family and friends; being proactively in charge of your own health care by visiting their doctors, physiotherapist and specialists whenever necessary -- all this equates to a balanced life.

SET REALISTIC GOALS: In last week's Newsletter, I talked about SMART goal setting. People who are successful with their fitness routines set realistic

goals regularly, both long-term and short-term. Annually you might set a target (i.e. lose 10 pounds, run a race, learn a new skill) while short term goals (i.e. increase number of sets or weight lifted) can help to keep you motivated. The exercise program can then be tailored to reach those goals. Monthly check-ins ensure that the target will be reached or else the program, the time line or the actual goal can be adjusted.

KNOW YOUR BODY: Exercising is one thing. Knowing and truly believing that your body is your temple is another. Successful exercisers keep up-to-date on health and fitness trends. They know that exercise decreases your risk of diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Good health involves being in tune with your body. Listen to your body to get to know when it needs rest, how much sleep it requires, how far it can be pushed and when it is prone to injury. When you understand the relationship of fitness and your overall health then you can exercise to add years to your life but more importantly, life to your years!!!

January 28, 2001 For a more detailed program or other questions, please email me at cathy.morenzie@sympatico.ca or call (416)410-8517. Remember, to always consult with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.