



SPORTS

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Little things can lead to big things



**Ed
Stiles**
Training
Matters



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Health is a journey not a destination.

Can you imagine a trainer telling his clients that “This is the standard! You’ll never get there. But you should keep trying.”

Clearly this guy is not getting paid for his motivational speaking abilities.

Or is he?

Our accomplishment-oriented culture tells us we need to achieve, set targets, check things off lists. However, the reality of organic systems and the human condition in general is that our health is a lifelong journey not a one-stop destination.

We simply need to “keep trying” from birth to the day of reckoning to be healthy. The daily choices we make about food, activity, sleep, indeed all lifestyle habits have a monumental impact on our functioning.

This is where many of us fail in our fitness and diet plans.

We go all or nothing, and “cold turkey,” embracing crash diets and excessive exercise, believing that all we need is more willpower. Invariably these drastic lifestyle changes make us miserable and life is too short so we jump off the wagon.

The diet and fitness capitalists make literally billions preying on our yearning for quick fix and magic pill solutions for this apparent lack of willpower.

Obviously there is a merry go round of failure and self abuse inherent in this approach. The 90 per cent failure rate of New Year’s resolutions indicates that clearly it’s time to re-frame our quest for better health.

The lifestyle change literature repeatedly indicates that drastic habit changes simply don’t work. Long term success is based more on small sustainable changes that add up over time: drinking a glass of water every morning, adding a couple daily fruits, no going back for seconds.

Goal setting is still at the centre of most success stories. The key, however, is choosing goals that are realistic and measurable: adding a couple 30 minute walks each week, running a local road race in three months, getting to bed before midnight.

After 23 years in the fitness industry I recommend against choosing weight loss as a goal. Seldom have I witnessed this lead to success. There are so many variables that affect our ability to drop poundage and so much self worth tied up in the success and failure thereof that people often sacrifice the very health they are trying to improve.

Instead adopt process-oriented goals around exercising more and eating smarter like the ones above. Stick with these subtle lifestyle habits, progressively adding new ones and before you know it you will be a much healthier you.

The healthiest people I know are in for the long term. They walk their dogs, ride bikes, hoist weights, take classes and take days off. They eat more fruits, veggies and protein and sometimes they eat cake. They accept the fact that the process doesn’t end.

They just keep trying!

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