



# SPORTS

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## Resolve to change your habits for the better



**Ed Stiles**  
Training Matters



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Hey gang, happy New Year, it's your friendly fitness writer guy here to remind you that your health is important! I've been on the front lines in the fitness industry since 1992. That's 25 years of watching people with the best of intentions striving to be better, stronger, leaner, to clear their mind, gain some more energy for their families, struggle to regain their health, attempt to reconnect with their younger fitter selves.

It is downright inspiring to witness people stepping out of their comfort zones, putting themselves out there. They come in all shapes and sizes, ages and abilities, with all manner of injuries and illnesses.

I feel blessed in my job every day just being a part of so much positive intention.

The flip side and the saddest part of my profession is how many people give up on their health before the Christmas decorations are put away.

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The reasons are varied and personal to each but there are some themes that consistently surface as reasons people fail to stick with healthy lifestyles.

One reason this happens is unrealistic expectations. No matter how many magazine covers promise amazing results in just two weeks, you will not solve your health and fitness woes without committing to a journey that is lifelong.

Simply stated, the human machine takes time to adapt to new realities. We must change daily habits regarding what we stick in our kisser, how active we are throughout the day, quality and quantity of sleep, and stress management.

Then, after we consistently apply these new habits 80-90 per cent of the time we will begin to move better, feel better, have more energy, and maybe even lose that pervasive beer gut.

Sorry gang, expecting to reverse years of unhealthy habits in just three weeks and three easy payments is misguided and will harm more than help.

The other big problem is misinformation and confusion about what is the best expenditure of time and energy often leaves people not knowing what they should do. It's paralysis by analysis.

Let's shed some light on some common confusing spots: High-intensity intervals or long duration, lower-intensity cardio? This should not be a debate! Both have huge benefits; HIIT applies well to those with a foundation of health upon which to build higher intensities, 2-3 times a week go for it, amp it up. But the other 3-4 days a week embrace that steady state deep breathing, mind cleansing walking, biking, swimming, aerobic activity. Anyone who tells you that taking a walk is a waste of your time has a shallow understanding of the benefits of movement to your health.

A client mentioned the other day how it is hard to know what to eat anymore with so many conflicting opinions out there. I don't disagree but let's begin by embracing what most opinions have in common; cut down our portion sizes, avoid highly processed foods and trans fats, drink more water, eat more fruits and vegetables, watch the hidden calories in the beverages we consume, and savour but acknowledge what does pass your lips.

I can also share that the folks who are successful over the long term are not searching for any short cuts or magic pills. They understand that healthy eating and regular exercise, whatever form it may take, are the magic pills.

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