

COVER STORY

Reasonable goals help you keep resolutions



MEGHAN JESSIMAN
RESOLUTIONS

Here's the thing about New Year's resolutions, especially those that are based on dropping a certain number of pounds or achieving a body like Charlize Theron's: no matter how good your intentions are, if you aren't fully committed to taking the actions needed to get you to your end goal, you might as well rip that carefully crafted list up right now.

It may sound like tough love on the third day of 2013, but it's the truth.

Now for the good news: for those of you who are legitimately ready to make some serious changes this year, but aren't entirely sure where or how to start, help has arrived.

A few notable factors make someone more likely to stick to their health and fitness resolutions long after January has come and gone, says Damir Mulalic, owner of Calgary-based Empowerment Personal Training.

The first involves setting reasonable goals.

"In my experience, setting more general goals such as 'getting back to a healthy weight' or 'exercising a minimum of three hours a week,' breeds more success than chasing after a specific number on the scale," says Mulalic.

"To set yourself up for success, it's also vital that you carefully consider how much time and effort you are willing to invest in reaching your goal.

"Ultimately with weight-based resolutions it is going to come down to how badly you want it and what you are willing to give up to get there."

If you are not willing to sacrifice watching your favourite television shows to hit the gym or stop indulging in Wing Wednesdays with your colleagues and opt for a balanced lunch you packed yourself,



Personal trainer Damir Mulalic works with Jane Tallick. Mulalic says setting more general goals such as "getting back to a healthy weight," tends to breed more success than "chasing after a specific number on the scale."

Adrian Shellard/For Neighbours

your personal goals need to reflect that.

"It's only when our actions are in line with our intentions that success is inevitable," says Mulalic. "The rest of the time we're just kidding ourselves."

Revising your resolutions to focus more on achieving optimal health and to better reflect what you are actually willing to commit to this year's project is the first step. But what about the action part of the equation?

Striking while the iron is hot and starting to make exercise a habit while your motivation is high is essential, but so too is sticking with it when things aren't changing as fast as you would like.

"It's going to take at least four weeks on any program to start seeing visible progress. But if you can dedicate 30 days to your cause, you will quickly start noticing changes," says Mulalic.

The beauty of having a substantial amount of weight to lose is the results happen fast and furious in the beginning. That positive feedback alone is great motivation to keep people on track striving for more.

The flip side though is if you aren't feeling great about yourself,

stepping into a crowded gym and getting started can be incredibly daunting. If intimidation is a factor, Mulalic suggests more private options to start.

"In-home personal training and boutique facilities remove other people from the picture altogether," he says. "If working with a trainer for the long haul is outside of your financial capabilities, there is always the option of hiring one for just a few sessions to get familiar with equipment and make sure your form is on point before you go it alone."

Some trainers, Mulalic included,

will even design workout programs for you to take to the gym and do yourself. This is a great option for those that have the motivation, but just lack the know-how.

When it comes to keeping resolutions, New Year's or otherwise, it all boils down to setting goals that are right for you.

"The best goals aren't usually about what someone looks like, but rather feeling good and being healthy," Mulalic says.

"Not only do they set you up for success in terms of reaching them, but your whole life just gets better along the way."

Resolutions: A Five-Part Series

Today: Where do I start?

Jan. 10: How do I keep momentum?

Jan. 17: How do I eat healthier?

Jan. 24: Is yoga/meditation for me?

Jan. 31: Is bio-feedback for real?

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Empowerment Personal Training offers fitness classes five days a week at various locations in south west Calgary, as well as one-on-one and small group training options. Visit empowermentpt.com.



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