

The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

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Top 5 Steps to Creating a Successful Exercise Program

Presented by:

January is just around the corner and many people have begun to plan their New Year's resolutions. Have you?

Maybe you have decided that it is time to lose a few extra pounds? Maybe you have decided to take your health more seriously? Or maybe you want to get into shape to impress that special someone?

According to research, two of the most popular New Year's resolutions are to lose weight and to start exercising.¹ Whatever your reasons for wanting to get into better shape, your chiropractor wants to ensure you do it safely and successfully.

Here are the steps that can help you achieve your exercise objectives:

1. Set a goal that is specific.

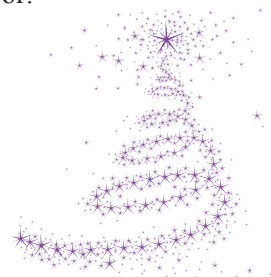
Whatever your vision is for your future, make sure it is clearly defined. Goals that are defined, time-specific and measurable are more likely to be attained. You can think of this in terms of running a race. If you do not know what the goal is, how will you ever be able to celebrate crossing the finish line?

Instead of setting a goal of losing weight, try adding numbers to your target, e.g. "To lose 5 pounds and 3 inches off my waist by June." This way you'll be able to track your successes and alter your plan if you get off-target.

2. Be realistic.

Make your goals achievable. One of the best ways to know what you will be able to do is to first find out where you are now. Make an appointment to see your chiropractor. Let him or her know what you would like to do, then get advice on whether it is possible given your current state of health. There is nothing more deflating than starting an exercise program, only to get injured shortly thereafter.

For instance, if you have not exercised in a long time, beginning an exercise program that involves a lot of running may be a little unrealistic or unsafe. Are you setting yourself up for failure or success? Ensuring that your goals are attainable right from the start will better prepare you to enjoy the fruits of your labor.



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Exercise of the Week

Child's Pose – Spinal Flexion

Difficulty: Easy

(Consult your chiropractor before doing this or any other exercise.)

Start: Place a mat on floor. Position your body as shown in Image #1, with spine in a neutral position.

Exercise: Try to move spine into a fully flexed position. Let hips approximate your heels, and relax muscles of spine. Let head lower toward floor. Place arms out in front of you, or relax them by your sides. Hold for 15-60 seconds. Return to neutral position and rest for 15 seconds. Repeat 5-10X.



3. Create a plan.

Structuring your time and energy to accomplish your goal step-by-step will improve your odds for following through with your vision. To establish structure, start with the end in mind, and work your way back to the starting point. Ask yourself the following question, "In order to achieve this, what needs to be in place first?" Then, continue to work backward, asking the same question over and over until you get to where you are now. If you can say honestly that everything is in place to get you past the first step, you are ready to go!

With an exercise program, you will need to consider what equipment you will require (i.e. running shoes, a gym membership). Are the resources affordable? And does your schedule allow for the time required to follow through with your plan?

4. Establish a support system.

Enlist people around you to help achieve your goals. Support systems can provide some well-needed motivation and accountability to keep you moving toward your goal.

Your chiropractor is an excellent resource for advice for any issues related to your body and its ability to accomplish what you have in mind. Finally, let your friends and family know about your plans for the new, healthier you. Having your loved ones aware of your goals can help you when the going gets tough.

5. Monitor your progress and celebrate!

Ensuring that your goals are measurable and time specific will help confirm you are on target. This allows you to modify your plan when necessary, and to celebrate the achievement of smaller, intermediate goals

When you celebrate your success, you create the positive fuel to propel you toward your ultimate goal. If you do not create a plan to do this, you may find it more difficult to stay connected with your original intention. You will feel deflated and off track as the result. Don't let this happen! Your chiropractor wants to celebrate all your healthy goals with you this upcoming year.

No matter what your goals are for 2011, follow these simple tips to help you achieve them. Ask for more advice whenever it is needed. And, for a healthier New Year, make regular chiropractic adjustments one of your main tools for good health!



Quote to Inspire

"Vision is the art of seeing things invisible."

- Jonathan Swift

References and Sources:

1. Norcross JC, Mrykalo MS, Blagys MD. Auld Lang Syne: Success predictors, change processes, and self-reported outcomes of New Year's resolvers and nonresolvers. *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 2002; 58(4): 397-405



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Writer/Editor: David Coyne

Writer: Dr. Christian Guenette, DC

Design: Elena Zhukova

Photos: Fred Goldstein

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