



## A New Look at Resolutions Actually Realistic Ones

It is that time of year again – time for New Year’s Resolutions. Year after year you hear people talk about setting realistic, specific, and measureable goals. But have you kept those resolutions and achieved as much as you set your sights?

If not, you are not alone as it is estimated that more than 88% of those who make New Year’s Resolutions will not reach their goal.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately it is an issue of adherence, which is the process or condition of steady or faithful attachment to something. But the problem does not exist with just one area as you can see in the following:

- 76-82% of those who begin an exercise program will drop out<sup>1</sup>
  - 50% in the first six months<sup>2</sup>
- Between 75-80% of those who begin a diet will drop out<sup>1</sup>
- Between 60-90% of those who attend a quit smoking program will start smoking again<sup>1</sup>

So this year as you visit the idea of a New Year’s Resolution, start by taking a look at what is realistic in your life. As you think about what your resolution, ask yourself ***why are you not doing it now?*** Most individuals will find barriers in the way of doing something, or they would already be doing it.

Barriers can be anything, real or perceived, that prevent you from accomplishing your goal. The four major barriers to exercise include:

- Lack of time
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of facilities or opportunities
- Fatigue

Once you have found your barriers, develop a strategy to overcome each of your barriers and then create a plan to stay on track. Of course, one of the best ways to stay on track is to set one of those realistic, specific, and measureable goals. But emphasize making goals that are truly obtainable for you, even if they seem too easy! Research has found that “those exercisers who failed to attain their own exercise goals dropped out roughly twice as fast as those who did attain them.”<sup>3</sup>

People often say “I’m going to lose 30 pounds or exercise everyday,” when 10 pounds is more doable, or three times a week is more likely. So start small and build up from there.

As you set your goals, think of the intensity, or difficulty, of exercise you will be engaging. While we all want to start with a bang, research by Pollock et al. found individuals engaging in higher intensity exercise to be associated with lower exercise adherence.<sup>4</sup> So again start small and build up from there.

Then to help keep you on track, create social support. Research has shown that subjects with spouses who actively supported their exercise habit were twice as likely to have good adherence compared to those



Tri4Fitness.net

What are you trying to do for fitness?

who were either neutral or opposed. Support can also be found in your exercise partner as significantly poorer long-term adherence was found in those who exercised alone. 47% of participants in individual aerobic exercise programs were adherent as opposed to 82% participating in groups.<sup>3</sup> Studies have found the presence of a highly task-cohesive group to be the greatest influence on exercise adherence.<sup>2</sup>

So as you start small and build your personal program towards adherence of your New Year's Resolutions there will be set backs along the way. Throughout every single one of my triathlon experiences, I have always found setbacks. Thru perseverance and adaptation, I have been able to overcome most of those setbacks. So stick with your goal and you can end up where you have set your sights, as long as you adhere to your resolution!

So resolve today to create a different way of creating your resolution.

1. The Cooper Institute. Personal Trainer Course Manual. The Cooper Institute Department of Education.07-20-09:Behavior Change p.1-3. Available from [www.cooperinstitute.org](http://www.cooperinstitute.org).
2. Estabrooks, P.A. Sustaining Exercise Participation through Group Cohesion. Exercise and Sport Science Reviews. 28(2):63-67, 2000.
3. Martin, J.E., Dubbert, P.M. Adherence to Exercise. Exercise and Sport Science Reviews. 13(1): 137-168, 1985
4. Pollock, M.L., Gettman, L.R., Milesis, C.A., Bah, M.D., Et. Al. Effects of frequency and duration of training on attrition and incidence of injury. Med. Sci. Sports. 9: 31-36, 1977.