

Storm Fitness Newsletter - Jan 2008

A health and fitness newsletter on how to stay looking and feeling your best at any age

Greetings Clients and Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season with your friends and family and a fun time ringing in 2008! With the New Year comes the talk of New Years Resolutions! Personally, I enjoy writing and keeping goals throughout the year but I always find the beginning of a new year is a great time to reflect upon accomplishments during the year and set additional goals or re-evaluate existing ones.

If you haven't done so already I suggest taking some quiet time to sit down and write out a few goals for yourself for 2008 – hopefully a few of them will be health and fitness related! It often seems like a daunting task...when you finish and look at the list it's easy to think how will I ever accomplish all of this? You will be surprised though – by writing it down you set the ball rolling into action.

This month I have included a special article on how to set yourself up on the right track with your resolutions by laying the proper foundation, so make sure you read this article. Laying the foundation could be the make or break of succeeding with your New Years resolutions. Also included is the first of a special series of articles titled 7 Secrets to a New Body! Make sure you don't miss out on these juicy pieces - you won't find this information being dispensed for free by any other health and fitness professional out there and the details being shared will change your life.

If you need assistance setting any health or fitness goals for this coming year feel free to drop me a line by email or phone. I would be happy to get you going in the right direction with proper motivation and most importantly, hold you accountable! Wishing you and your family health and happiness in 2008!

Yours in Health and Fitness,

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6 Rules to Setting Your New Years Resolutions

Laying the Proper Foundation For Success...

As the first few months of the New Year slip away, do you find your resolutions slipping away as well? Resolutions should be reasonably attainable so that you are setting yourself up for success rather than disappointment. Try focusing on small intermediate goals that will ultimately lead you to your primary goal. Do not expect to be perfect. Aim for a healthy lifestyle that you will feel comfortable sticking with.

1. TAKE SMALL STEPS:

Simply establishing the goal of leading a healthy lifestyle should make you feel good about yourself. To make that goal more attainable, come up with small goals you know you can meet each day to help keep yourself feeling positive. Accomplishing the smaller goals will leave you with a more immediate feeling of success. If your goals are too large, you may get caught up in them and feel disappointed when you do not see immediate results.

Small behavior-change plans are easier to stick to than vague resolutions like (I will lose 10 pounds.) If your resolution is too large, add a plan of action that will guide you toward your goal. Rather than (I will exercise more,) try (I will go for a walk at lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays and work out in the gym Mondays and Fridays.) This way you can feel a sense of accomplishment every day, and if you miss a day, you can get right back on track rather than feeling like a failure.

2. CHANGE FOR YOURSELF:

Any goals that you set should come from a sincere desire to change for yourself. Research has shown that negative feelings are a frequent cause of relapse in behavior-change programs, and resolutions that feel like punishment can cause negative feelings. All resolutions should be perceived as positive changes that will help you reach optimal health and well-being. Do not decide to change to please anyone other than yourself. And remember, resolutions are an opportunity for you to look forward in a positive way rather than to punish yourself for past behaviors.

3. BE CREATIVE:

Perhaps you can find ways to exercise while also accomplishing other goals. If weather permits, try walking to do errands that are in close proximity to your home or office. Maybe you need to spend more time with your family. Try walking with a family member or bringing your children along on bikes while you walk or jog. If your goal is to make new friends, try taking classes where you will meet other people who share your same exercise interests.

4. BE REALISTIC:

Be sure that your plan of action is realistic. Plan to work out at times when it is convenient for you. If you are not a morning person, do not plan to work out early in the morning or you will just be setting yourself up for failure. Try to make things as easy as possible for yourself. Set your goals at reasonable heights so that you can reach them one by one without feeling overwhelmed. The only way your goal is going to become reality is if you believe in it and, most of all, if you believe in yourself. It may help you reinforce your goal if you can find a realistic role model who is actually living your goal. If they can do it, so can you!

5. REWARD FOR SUCCESS:

If things like weather and illness will prevent you from sticking to your plan, make alternate plans for situations that you cannot avoid. Most importantly, do not let a missed day or two throw you completely off target. Instead, do your best to get back on track as quickly as possible, which should not be extremely difficult if you have set appropriate goals.

It is easier to stick to your plan when you feel good about yourself. Try to find a new way to reward yourself when you meet your smaller goals. If you are trying to eat healthier, be sure that all of your meals are still delicious, and allow yourself a small dessert after a few days of healthy habits. Be sure to get involved in activities that keep you feeling happy and fulfilled.

6. BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM:

Get the support of your family, friends and co-workers. If your resolution involves quitting a serious addiction like smoking, drinking or an eating disorder, get professional help and join a support group if possible. Remember that you are your best supporter. You are trying to improve your own health. Appreciate what you have and then try to treat it a little bit better than you have in the past. If you take better care of your body, you will feel better and perform better at all that you do. Keep in mind that a well-thought-out resolution can be a useful tool to help you live your life the best way possible, starting from the inside.

Additional Tips & Pointers

1. Focus on positive self-talk. Congratulate yourself every time you take a step towards your resolution goal. Be your own best cheerleader.
2. Avoid berating yourself if you should fall back or break a resolution. Just brush yourself off and start over again.
3. Stick to your resolution by considering it a promise to yourself, not a test of your willpower.
4. Avoid situations that put you in temptation's path, in other words...if you're on a diet, don't go to the ice cream parlor.
5. Keep a sticky note in a prominent place so that you see it every day, reminding yourself of your resolutions. (i.e., on your bathroom mirror, next to your bed, on the visor of your car, on the refrigerator)

What would you attempt to do if you knew you would not fail?

- *Robert Schuller*



Are you Sabotaging Your Metabolism?

Calories are king in my fitness program and believe it or not, you could currently be sabotaging your own metabolism by not eating enough calories and you may not even know it! Does this scenario sound familiar....You decide you need to lose a few pounds so you tell yourself okay; I am going to start my diet tomorrow. Of course by diet, you mean eating less as you figure this will surely get you to lose this extra weight.

Tomorrow rolls around and you *severely* begin reducing your calorie intake and you start going to the gym to exercise on a more regular basis. You manage to continue to do this for several weeks and are quite successful but after week 4 you hit a plateau and your weight loss completely stops! Fed up and discouraged you go back to your old ways. Or, maybe your scenario is a slightly different one, maybe you're an athlete or a runner eating 1,000 calories a day and wondering why you might be feeling cranky, tired and unable to lose that last 5-10lbs.

One of the reasons why the people in the above 2 scenarios are not losing weight is due to a nutrition program lacking in the appropriate amount of calories. By severely limiting their calorie intake, they have wrecked havoc on their metabolism and it has grinded to a halt and is no longer working efficiently for them...hence the plateau in weight loss. Like I said above, calories are king and you might actually need to be eating more calories than you think in order to lose weight.

Now I know this sounds counter intuitive and goes against everything you've read that basically says the less calories you eat the more weight loss you will lose. However, let me explain why it's so important to be eating the appropriate amount of calories for your body so that you can get past sabotaging your metabolism and on to stoking and revving that metabolism of yours to burn some major calories so that your body ends up working for you instead of against you.

So it seems everything we read says to cut calories but if you don't know what your calorie range should be and instead you're just mindlessly slashing calories then that is considered reckless behavior in my books.

When you don't get enough calories into your body, it begins to panic and goes into what's known as "starvation" mode, slowing down your metabolism and fat-burning processes. If it's being starved of calories, it has to hold onto all of the energy stores and calories that it can.

Think of your body as a furnace. If there's not enough fuel, the fire just simmers for a long time without really burning hot. If you're not eating enough calories to match your activity level, your body just simmers and no real progress is being made. The danger is that people react to this type of plateau by eating even less, which of course just makes the problem worse and harder to recover from. It's a horrible cycle that can lead to some serious problems.

The key is to increase your calories with highly nutrient dense food to fuel your body! In terms of diet, I would focus on lean protein sources (chicken breast, turkey breast, egg whites) and lean fibrous carbs coming mostly from non-starchy vegetables (broccoli, mushrooms, yellow squash, green peppers, etc.) Try and limit all starchy carbs from your diet and limit fruit after 6pm, since it contains lots of simple sugars which can affect your insulin levels and hinder your weight loss.

Your plan should be sure to include 3 meals and 2-3 small snacks per day so that your blood sugar stays stable throughout the day. Remember to also add weight training to your exercise routine. It can add powerful calorie burning pounds of lean muscle which will keep your metabolism stoked throughout the day!

If your wondering exactly how many calories you should be eating, there are 3 factors involved: Your weight loss goals, your Basal Metabolic Rate (the number of calories your body burns via normal, everyday functions), and how much exercise you get. First, calculate your BMR. Next, consider how much activity you get. Add the calories you burn through activity and exercise for one day to your BMR. This is your baseline for daily calorie needs.

To lose 1 pound per week (if that's your goal), you'd simply eat 500 calories less than this number each day. Whatever your baseline is, more than 1,000 calories per day below that (resulting in 2 pounds lost per week) is not a good idea. Your body needs enough nutrition and energy to deal with whatever exercise level you choose. At bare minimum, no matter what, I strongly urge women to not drop below 1,200 calories daily and men to not drop below 1,500 calories daily. Any lower than that and starvation mode – or worse – will almost always kick in. Since menus and eating realities change daily, average ranges work better than absolute percentages. For the most part, your calorie intake should come from:

40-65% Carbohydrates

10-35% Proteins

20-35% Fats

It's important to try to meet these ranges every day to fulfill your energy and nutrient needs without creating more fat storage. But if you miss these ranges periodically, don't stress too much, just keep an eye on it and work on improving your habits. Trying to match an exact number – or even a range -- every single day is unrealistic. If your results are within these ranges over time, that's what matters most. If you need assistance in determining a good calorie range for you based on your current activity level and health I recommend speaking to a nutritionist or dietician to get you started on a healthy program with the right amount of calories so that you are working for your body instead of against it.

7 Secrets To a New Body

As a certified personal trainer and nutritionist I often get asked what are the best ways to get my body back into kick butt shape again? Are there any shortcuts, magic pills or secrets? Well, unfortunately there are no short cuts, only long hard work, and there are no magic pills nor do I believe there ever will be.

There are however some secrets. What I would like to do is share with you my top 7 secrets for getting yourself a new body! I will be spacing these secrets out over the course of 7 separate articles appearing each month so that I can go into greater detail regarding each of these secrets. You will have a full month to implement each of these secrets into your life before receiving the next one. Within 7 months the goal is to have implemented each of these “7 Secrets” into your life!

Secret #1 The Secret of Food

Eat Organic:

If you don't currently eat organic you might want to reconsider. Many people think that organic is all hype but the truth of the matter is that it's not. Organic foods, such as an organic tomato, have a qualitative value which a commercial tomato could not match. The organically-grown tomato has not had any pesticides used to keep its natural enemies away from them. Typically, organic farmers use a *natural* pesticide that is safe and does not diminish the quality of the tomato. However, a commercially-grown tomato has lost a great deal of its nutrition because of the pesticides used to keep it safe from its natural enemies.

Another reason to eat an organic tomato (or any organic foods for that matter) is that organic food is picked when it is ripe versus the commercial tomato. Since organic food is picked when it is ripe, the food has had the ability to absorb all the trace vitamins and minerals which is sadly lacking in commercial foods. Commercial foods are picked when the vegetables are still green and do not have the opportunity to absorb all the trace vitamins and minerals which the soil offers. In essence, all the consumer is getting from the commercial grown food is filler with very little amounts of vitamins and minerals. In contrast, the organic tomato has an enormous amount of nutrition and a taste which the commercially grown tomato will not match.

There are certain foods that you should make sure that you eat organic over others. Some conventionally grown foods are treated with more pesticides than others and some retain more of the pesticides. Here is a list of the top 10 foods containing the most pesticides. High-Pesticide Foods: Strawberries, Spinach, Cherries, Peaches, Mexican Cantaloupe, Celery, Apples, Apricots, Green Beans.

Keep in mind that local farmers markets and grocery stores like trader Joe's and Whole Foods are good places to shop organic. You can also find organic foods in the organic produce section of your local grocery store. Most importantly, always read labels of anything you buy. If you don't know what an ingredient is chances are good that you shouldn't be consuming it.

Eat Lot 's of Different Colors:

Each different color signifies the presence of a different carotenoid, a type of phytochemical. Each carotenoid brings its own unique benefits. We all know that fruits and vegetables are good for us, but here's a list of what the different colors mean for your health:

- The color: Reds such as strawberries, red grapes, beets, and tomatoes. The payoff: Improves blood flow to the heart, protects against Alzheimer's disease.
- The color: Whites like bananas, pears, onions, and mushrooms. The payoff: Helps to maintain heart health and healthy cholesterol levels.
- The color: Greens like kiwi, pears, broccoli, and peas. The payoff: Helps build strong bones and teeth and protects your vision.
- The color: Yellows/Oranges like mangos, pineapple, carrots, and pumpkin. The payoff: Boosts your immune system, protects the health of your heart and eyes.
- The color: Blues/Purples like figs, blueberries, eggplant, and cabbage. The payoff: Protects your memory, helps your urinary tract stay healthy.

Because each colorful carotenoid has something different to offer, vary the hue of the produce you eat throughout the day to reap all of the benefits. The more vibrant your meal, the better it is for you.

Limit Processed Foods:

Many processed foods are made with trans fats, saturated fats, and large amounts of sodium and sugar. These types of foods should be avoided, or at least eaten sparingly. Processed foods that may not be as healthy as fresh foods include: canned foods with lots of sodium; white breads and pastas made with refined white flour, which are not as healthy as those made with whole grains; packaged high-calorie snack foods, like chips and cheese snacks; high-fat convenience foods, like cans of ravioli; frozen fish sticks and frozen dinners; packaged cakes and cookies; boxed meal mixes; sugary breakfast cereals; processed meats.

These processed foods and prepackaged meals are very convenient and popular. If you do shop for these foods, be sure to look for products that are made with whole grains, low in sodium and calories, and free of trans fats. Make sure you pay attention to serving size, too, and balance out the processed foods you eat with a delicious fresh salad and some whole grain bread.

Graze Not Gorge:

Make sure to eat 4-6 small meals a day to control your blood sugar. The main theory around this eating habit is that smaller meals can help one lose weight and absorb nutrients more efficiently. Experts believe that the body can only handle so much at one serving without eliminating or storing excess nutrients.

Eating the same calories spread out over smaller meals four to six times during the day has been shown to raise the body's thermic effect, resulting in 10% more calories being burned. Furthermore, nibbling throughout the day prevents long stretches of starvation. Going from noon to 6:00pm without eating usually ends with an enormous supper. This is a very bad eating habit seeing as our metabolism can only handle a certain amount of calories, carbs, fat, and protein in one sitting.

Recent Findings/Benefits of Herbs:

Green Tea - Today, most people have heard about green tea, learning about the many benefits offered. Green tea has been shown from in-depth studies performed around the world to help fight cancer, lower bad cholesterol, fight tooth decay, reduce weight, and lower high blood pressure.

Cayenne Pepper - Improves circulation and digestion and has thermogenic effects. In one study it was shown that cayenne increased core body temperature, which in turn increased the metabolism and caused the participants to lose more weight than the group not taking cayenne.

Cinnamon - Creates a thermogenic burn. It reduces cholesterol levels – in particular, lowering bad cholesterol while leaving good cholesterol the same. It is cinnamon's effect on blood sugar that makes it a potential help in the war against obesity, insulin resistance, sometimes known as "prediabetes," and the "Metabolic Syndrome." Cinnamon can be used in its powdered or stick form, adding it to drinks and foods, or as a supplement.

Flax seed - A bulk laxative that helps curb hunger. Loaded with vitamins and phytonutrients, it is an excellent source of protein and fiber, flaxseed is nature's gift to health! Besides stabilizing the body sugar levels, flax expands five times in bulk when ingested. Flax taken half an hour before meals can help you eat less, so you will lose weight while simultaneously strengthening your immune system.

Ginger Root - The main ingredients found in Ginger Root help to neutralize stomach acids and stimulate the appetite. Ginger has been widely used to reduce nausea related to postoperative surgery, motion sickness and morning sickness. Studies have also shown that Ginger Root helps to reduce inflammation and provide relief from chronic pain.

As a final end note, 20 years ago a hamburger had 330 calories. Today a hamburger has 1,400. For a woman that could be more than her daily caloric intake that was allowed if she was trying to lose weight.

Do you know what you would have to do to burn that many calories? Well, an average person burns about 100 calories per mile, so that means that you would have to walk or run roughly 14 miles to burn off that hamburger. Just a thought to consider before pulling into the drive-through.

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.

- Henry Ford

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the Storm Fitness Newsletter. Thank you again for coming along for the journey with us and we wish you a very happy and successful fall season with all of your health and fitness goals! Again, if you need anything at all we are always here to answer any questions you might have.

Yours in Health and Fitness,

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