

Healthy Hearts & Bodies with Heartstrong

April 19th, 2010

We all make empty resolutions to ourselves. "This year, I'm going to run my first marathon," "Next month, I'm going to shave a minute off my mile," "One day, I'm going to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro" We sprinkle ambitious goals into conversations with friends at dinner parties and with colleagues at work. However, it seems these deeds are much more easily said than done. Year after year our ambitious to-do lists remain unchecked and we become less and less motivated to see them through to the end.

Tara Zimliki, creator of **Tara's Boot Camp**, is one health expert who has helped many people achieve a range of fitness goals. Whether overcoming weight-loss challenges, running their first marathons, or improving their overall health, Tara has coached her clients through their most difficult fitness endeavors. Along the way, she has taught them to live by the credo that taking on a personal fitness milestone is just as much a physical feat as it is a mental one.

Maintain achievable mini-goals.

Impossible Fitness Goal: Break the Yo-Yo Diet Cycle

- **Easy Solution: Consult a Good Personal Trainer**
 - **Sometimes we need a little one-on-one attention to get us to the goal weight we desire.** "People are often unsuccessful because they try to fit into the mold of what they think they should be doing, instead of trying something tailored to personal preference," Tara warns. Some of us may be turned off by the cost of personal trainers and health experts, but many people don't realize these sessions need not last forever.
 - **Think of a personal training session as an investment.** Tara says, "I sometimes come across clients that only need to meet with me for a few months or even a couple weeks." A good trainer knows when a client is able to be on his or her own. Once you have the knowledge and guidance that can only come from a certified health professional, you will have the tools to defeat your waistline woes once and for all.

Impossible Fitness Goal: Lose Those Last Five-Ten Pounds

- **Easy Solution: Enter a Weight-Loss Contest**
 - **The most important thing to do when getting rid of those last few unwanted pounds is to stay motivated.** What better way to do so than with a little competition? Tara suggests joining a weight-loss competition or starting one with friends and family in order to get you through a diet slump.
 - **Studies show support from a partner or buddy will increase your chance for successful weight loss.** If there's a prize involved, the cash incentive will give you that extra push to see this objective to the end. You'll lose those nagging pounds easily – no contest!

Impossible Fitness Goal: Run Your First Marathon

- **Easy Solution: Start Training Early**
 - **Tara says, "The most important thing about training for a marathon is to start early."** Race day is the culmination of months of training and preparation. However, don't be discouraged by the commitment you are about to make.
 - **The Internet offers online workout-building devices and nutrition calculators to help you set a realistic training program.** By creating a personalized training guide, you know exactly how much time you need to get race-day ready. There are thousands of marathons each year, so don't feel rushed to get this lofty goal checked off your list. You will make it happen in due time!

Impossible Fitness Goal: Break a Personal Record

- **Easy Solution: Take a Break!**
 - **Competing in a 5K, 10K, marathon, or triathlon is a feat in itself, but breaking a previous race time is a glorious accomplishment.** A faster time is concrete proof of all your hard work and dedication, regardless of whether or not you won the race.
 - **In order to beat a personal record at your next competition, Tara says to keep track of your progress daily, including on off-days, and take breaks often.** "The worst thing you can do before race day is to burn yourself out," Tara warns. When monitoring her clients' progress, Tara has found that runners at a 10 minute/mile pace tend to lose about 15 seconds when they walk for one minute.

This means that for every minute run, the runner only has to run 5 seconds faster. This break also gives the runner time to recover and regain his or her strength. For veteran competitors, running at a slower pace, rather than walking, can have similar effects on your race time.

Impossible Fitness Goal: Bounce Back From an Injury or Hiatus

- **Easy Solution: Alternate Between Different Types of Workouts**

- **Re-starting your old fitness regimen can be more difficult than it was the first time around.** The fear of a repeat injury or being unable to complete a desired work-out can be daunting. "In general, people need to find what is most comfortable for them," Tara notes. She recognizes that there are many intimidating aspects to getting back into shape.
- **During the first few weeks back of releasing your pent-up physical and emotional energy, there is a danger of overdoing it.** Tara recommends working out differently than you are used to. "Biking or swimming can be great alternatives to running and weight-lifting, for example," she says. Trying a new fitness program will not only force you to start slow, but will help keep your body sturdy when you decide to return to your normal work-out.

Evaluate your goals in terms of the joy and fulfillment they will bring you once they are completed. No matter how big or small, each milestone will make you stronger in body and mind. When beginning your next fitness task, keep these expert tips in mind and before you know it, you'll be scaling Mt. Everest. Good luck!

Tara is a Certified Personal Trainer through The American Council on Exercise (ACE), and a Boot Camp Instructor. She has competed and trained with top athletes at the University of South Carolina where she was awarded a full cross-country scholarship. Tara has a B.A. from Rutgers University and specializes in fat loss and nutrition

Tara has completed 15 Marathons and hundreds of races worldwide. In 2008, Tara placed in the top 500 women for the NYC Marathon. Tara 's practices what she preaches in all aspects of fitness and health and for this reason she is a trusted trainer that produces results. For more information, please visit www.tarasbootcamp.com