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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

How to Follow Through With That Gym Resolution!

Every New Year's Eve, I listen to dozens of my patients make the same resolution. They would vow to go to the gym three times a week. They get their membership and make great progress. But then, usually by March 1, like clockwork, a funny thing happens. For some reason that can be justified at the time, they just seem to get "too busy". From that moment on, their day-to-day demands override their grand ambition to get in shape

So, how do you stay the course when life's pressures and hassles keep pulling you off track? I recently read an interesting article by **Gene Hayden**. She is a creative strategist and professional business coach. This is what she had to say...

The surprising secret to staying on track

"I discovered it doesn't matter what you want to do—get fit, start a business, write a screenplay—you're going to have to get over hurdles to make it happen. In a surprise discovery, my research showed it wasn't passion, determination, focus, brilliance or any other superhero qualities that prompt people to persevere. **It's the challenge of figuring out how to keep going when the going gets tough** that keeps people hooked. Without exception, all those I interviewed said the inevitable obstacle path that you have to run to achieve your goal gives you material for a terrific story. **The story is your motivation to follow through.** You feel great about yourself as you tell yourself, and others, about how you are finding ways to meet your targets, despite everything. Abandon the pursuit and you don't have much to boast about."

How to ensure you reach your goals

"So for this New Year, raise a toast to your story. Make your vow to find a way to do what you want. My research confirms **there are practical, simple solutions for overcoming every obstacle.** To get you started on the path, here are some tried and true strategies for maneuvering around the four common hurdles that had me stumped. I can guarantee these work."

1. There's a leak in your gas tank

"In-between work and family, you are out of fuel. You don't have a drop of energy to spare for your ambition. The solution is to **feel the weariness, but don't talk to it.** Just as dancers with blistered toes don't stop to question whether they feel like rehearsing,

don't ask yourself if you are in the mood to do whatever your resolution requires. Instead, **view your plan as a deal you can't back out of.** And you will discover that taking even the smallest step toward your goal will give you a surge in energy. Conversely, nothing is more draining than wrestling with the guilt of inaction."

2. There's no spare cash to invest in your goal

"Most resolutions come with some kind of price tag. Gym memberships, special diets, courses or yoga classes may cost more than you feel you can afford. But recognize that **a goal is not an indulgence or a whim, but an investment in your future.** It's your way to be the person you want to be. Pare your goal of all its bells and whistles to determine the bare minimum required to take it to the next step. And examine your spending habits to find non-essential purchases you can sacrifice in favour of your resolution. You don't have to give up lattes forever, just until you break through the finish line."

3. You don't have the time

"You have to cater to so many people's needs, you don't have a minute to spare on your own. It's as if you have a seat on a flight to Paris, but feel you have to give it up to anyone who asks for it. Where does that leave you? Going nowhere, and feeling miserable. Complain and people will shrug that they never asked you to be a martyr. And to add insult to injury, they're right. Miraculously, if you tell people that this time you are determined to fly, they will not only respect your desire, they will also find new resourcefulness to take care of their own needs. And to make sure you give yourself the time you require, **schedule in steps towards your goal as you would a series of can't-be-missed dentist appointments.**"

4. You feel discouraged

"Rather than feeling like you're moving forward, you feel like you're backsliding. It's enough to make you want to give up the pursuit altogether. But at the best of times, progression towards a goal is a two-step forward, one-step back dance. When you're doing the moon walk, **look for minuscule wins to celebrate.** Your goal at this point is to feel good about what you have done, rather than feel bad about what you haven't. If you didn't get to the gym but walked around the block, or skipped the salad but also skipped a third cookie, it's a small victory worthy of a pat on a back. And one victory always leads to another."

Good luck with those New Year's resolutions and don't give up!