

# What Motivates You? Creating Long-term Lifestyle Changes

**W**hat motivates you to work out? What inspires you to go for a walk, hit the gym, or take a hike? Maybe you are trying to fit into that swimsuit or bikini or look svelte for your 20-year class reunion, or perhaps you just want to get into those skinny pants from college. These all sound like reasonable goals for getting into shape—but will these motivations last?

As a personal trainer, I've heard every reason on earth for why people want to lose weight and get fit. But let me tell you a secret—the desire to look good on your vacation, or to buy a smaller pants size is short-lived. Not only do these goals not last long, they also don't work very well.

According to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), at any given time, almost 70 million Americans are trying to lose weight or prevent weight gain. But many of these people find themselves faced with a choice between responsible weight loss programs and products and the many "miracle" weight loss products on the market. The attraction

**TOP 3 MOTIVATORS FOR MY HEALTH:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**It's not how hard you train. It's how smart you train!**

of the so-called miracle products is that they offer huge weight loss results with everything from creams to pills—and zero effort. Says the FTC, "In the end, these quick fixes do nothing to address the nation's or the individual's weight problem, and, if anything, may contribute to an already serious health crisis."

Most experts agree that the key to sustained weight management is long-term lifestyle changes that include common sense

nutrition and regular physical exercise. But we have all tried a "quick fix" or a "quick training" technique to lose weight or get in shape. I have. I admit it. In preparation for my first Boston Marathon, the longest distance I ran was 16 miles and all of those were on the treadmill. I thought I would be able to feed off the energy of the crowd and the other runners during the race to keep me going. Little did I know that taking this shortcut was not a wise decision. My quads really paid for this shortsightedness and it was a really tough race. Through that experience I learned that, whether I am training for a race or just working to increase my endurance, I have to do the work! Since that race, I've completed 10 consecutive Boston Marathons and eight Ironman™ Triathlons, all with the proper time and effort put into my training. My biggest lesson? Think long-term!

This is exactly why I help my personal training clients and my company's customers to focus on long-term fitness goals outside of the skinny pants syndrome. I teach them to concentrate on what really counts—improving their overall health so they can live a long and happy life. For example, did you know that studies show that being overweight or obese raises the risk for Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, sleep apnea, and a long list of other major health problems? These are important issues because besides having an impact on how you look, they will determine how you feel.

What if you started thinking about weight loss in terms of fitness, with real life motivators? Here's some great ways to combine fun with fitness:

- Play ball with the kids—instead of watching from the sidelines!
- Inspire your loved ones through personal commitment to your health!

- Hike the trails, ski the slopes, and keep up with everyone around you!
- Rake leaves with the grandkids and jump into the biggest pile!
- Dust off that bike in the garage and enjoy a ride around the block!

Once you begin thinking about fitness within the framework of long-term health, all of this makes sense. Plan a workout program from this perspective and you'll find it easier to skip the smorgasbord and crank out one more repetition on the weight machine or get outside for a run on a Sunday morning. With that commitment, there are many ways to find a program that will fit your lifestyle. Be sure to look for a whole-health approach; the key to real change is combining a high-quality fitness plan with smarter nutritional choices. Watch out for rapid weight loss claims that require no diet or exercise (depending on your fitness level, healthy weight loss is one to two pounds per week). In general, if a fitness program sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

There is nothing more inspirational (and fun) than seeing and feeling results from your hard work! Great abs and hard biceps are cool, but so is reducing stress, maintaining agility, and lowering blood pressure. Remember why your good health matters—some of the best reasons for staying fit have to do with how you live life itself: playing basketball late into the night with your kids, running a 5K with your daughter, and sticking around long enough to bounce your grandchildren on your knee.

In the clip out box, jot down the top three things in your life that motivate you. Post these in your daytimer, on the refrigerator, or at the office. Keep this list as a constant reminder of why you want to get to the gym after work. Do your workouts in association with a whole-health fitness program and you'll find that you gain true rewards from your time and effort.

Remember: keep it fun and simple! »»

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Check out our website:  
[www.humanbean.org](http://www.humanbean.org)

The medium is the message and so is the x-large.

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is one of the nation's foremost authorities on heart rate-based interval training. Through his company, Breakthrough Health & Fitness, Jonathan promotes the use of heart rate-based interval workouts to achieve maximum fitness and weight loss results in the shortest period of time. For more information visit:  
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