New Year Fitness Challenge

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Every new year, new fitness resolutions are created.
Whether it is to get in shape, lose weight, or generally become healthier, people all over the world state their new intentions with starting a new fitness program.
However, only about 8-10% actually succeed in achieving their new year's fitness resolutions.

Is there an explanation for this low new year's resolution success rate?
And, if so, how can new resolutions improve the chances of succeeding in the new year?
Truth is - It is all about mindset, planning, and last but not least (actually most importantly) - Execution!
In this short e-book, we will set a challenge for you. A challenge to push you towards optimizing your health and performance.
But remember, just because the new year is right around the corner, doesn't mean you should wait.
The sooner you start, the better.
Before we dive deep into the actionable advice, let's discuss some more important things.

What Is The Goal?

First of all, new years fitness resolutions are highly individual. It might be getting in shape for one person, another trying new fitness classes, and the third is perhaps training for a new half marathon.

And even these three new years fitness resolution examples have different approaches to them regarding goal setting and execution!

To understand the new year's resolutions success rate, we have to look at it from a different perspective.

As people make new years resolutions in the hopes of getting healthier and fitter, there is a new year's fitness and weight loss resolution failure rate, as we already mentioned.

This new year's fitness resolution failure rate is due to several factors: lack of preparation, bad training plan (or nonexistent), no clear goal-setting, and finally - not following through with new years health goals!

Most new year's fitness resolutions fail because one of the above new year's health resolution mistakes has been made.

So, what can we do to fix this?

First and foremost, it comes down to...

Mindset!



It is actually no surprise that new years weight loss and fitness resolutions fail so quickly - when you set yourself up for failure from the beginning, then the new year's resolution failure rate is no surprise!

Before anything else, you have to change your mindset.

Just because the new year has arrived doesn't necessarily mean it is the most suitable time to start.
Taking care of your body and mind should turn into regular habits rather than a short-lived goal.
It's just that the New Year is a symbol - One that signifies the beginning of something new and perhaps, in your case, the beginning of the greater YOU.
So focus on your mindset first - Realize that self-care is of utmost importance, and it doesn't matter if it's January the 1st or 20th of April - The sooner you start, the better!
This leads us to the next point, which is namely, to set goals.

Setting Realistic Goals

The new year brings plenty of motivation and momentum, both for your fitness goals and any other personal dreams and goals that you have. However, in the midst of all this overwhelming motivation, you may come to find that you are setting quite unrealistic, unsustainable goals, such as:

- Losing 30 lbs in a month
- Completely overhauling your life
- Losing your old self and creating a new one

If that is the case, you should come to realize that massive, instant change isn't really needed. Even more so, sudden changes may turn out to be unbearable for your body and mind, so when setting goals, do so in an incremental approach.

Realize that your body likes change, but it likes it slow.

Set simple goals, such as:

- Becoming more active
- Making better food choices
- Getting better at managing stress
- Becoming more aware of automatic, self-sabotaging behaviors (i.e eating bad foods daily)
- Improving your sleep

These simple goals will set the fundament for you to achieve and over-achieve other more specific goals.

With these considerations out of the way, let's discuss two of the most common goals for the New Year - Losing fat and gaining muscle!

Losing Fat During The New Year

With obesity being on the rise during the past couple of decades, fat loss is one of the most common New Year's resolutions, without a doubt!

And this is perfectly understandable - Who wouldn't want to get rid of all that excess weight?

However, losing fat requires a concrete plan, especially regarding your nutrition!
The good thing? Fat loss depends on ONE main principle - Calories in VS Calories Out.
In order to lose fat, you have to take in fewer calories than you burn throughout the day, otherwise known as "eating in a caloric deficit".

And though that stands true, there are many other important considerations for a successful weight loss fitness plan.

We can get deep into the science of it, but allow us to just give you the actionable advice in a couple of bullet points!

- **Get balanced macronutrients!**

Once you have established a moderate caloric deficit, it is time to take care of the nutrients you give to the body.

Protein and fats are essential for the optimal functioning of the body, meaning that the body needs them, but can't produce them on its own.

Aim to consume about one gram of protein per lb. of bodyweight, along with up to 0.45g of fat per lb of bodyweight.
And don't forget your carbs, because...

- **Training performance is important!**

Besides a moderate caloric deficit and sufficient protein and fats, training is vital for your weight loss regimen.
Not only because training will help you burn off some extra calories, but also because it helps you retain lean body mass... And makes you look tighter, more toned, and sexier naked!
This is especially valid for weight training and other types of resistance training.
And guess what - Carbohydrates are the best energy source for such types of training.

- **Take Diet Breaks!**

We all know how exhausting a weight loss diet can be, both mentally and physically.
Through the new year, as your weight loss plan advances. Make sure to get frequent diet breaks, where you still track calories but eat at maintenance rather than a deficit.
This will give your body and mind a break from the chains of fat loss and will prepare you for your next bout of eating in a caloric deficit.
Diet breaks can be implemented for 10-14 days, every 3-4 weeks of eating in a caloric deficit.
And remember, a diet break doesn't mean entirely ditching your eating habits and losing track - it simply means eating some extra calories without creating significant changes in weight!
A low carb intake may simply mean that your performance will suffer, so in all cases, a balanced ratio of all three macronutrients is optimal.
Remember - This new year's fitness goal requires discipline, which comes down to mindset again - You need to be aware that you are doing this for the long term!
You won't just do "one fitness resolution" and get to your dream shape - You have to sustain the habits!

Gaining Muscle During The New Year

Since the dawn of the Golden Era of bodybuilding, when Arnold and his peers were reigning, developing an aesthetic, muscular physique has been a primary goal for many trainees.

Besides fat loss, muscle gaining becomes one of the relevant goals that people set for the new year, with the idea of realizing their highest physical potential.
And again, that is no wonder because none of us would turn down a perfectly aesthetic, proportional physique with all the tiny details like muscle fibers and separations.

Though all of this sounds tempting, the truth is that just like fat loss, muscle building requires important considerations and a well-thought-out plan of action.
Now let's have a look at the most important things to factor in.

- **Create A Moderate Caloric Surplus**

So, you learned that fat loss requires a moderate caloric deficit - That allows you to burn more fat than you store and thus, reduce the overall amount of fat you hold.

Muscle gains, however, are the exact opposite - Building that new, active tissue (muscle mass) would require some extra energy because, well, it's simple thermodynamics!

If you want to stack more mass (which has its energy content), you have to provide that extra bit of energy.

This, therefore, implies that you should consume slightly more calories than you burn, also known as "eating in a caloric surplus."

The extra food will provide energy for better performance, recovery, and the growth of your muscles.

Nevertheless, the more isn't the better here - Just like fat loss requires a moderate deficit, muscle gaining requires a moderate surplus because too much extra energy will lead to excessive fat gain.

- **Choose The Right Exercises!**

Unlike fat loss, where exercising isn't mandatory (yes, fat loss can be done with NO exercise whatsoever), muscle gaining is a different story. In order for your body to build muscle, there needs to be a reason for it to do so, or in other words, a training stimulus.

The main functions of muscle growth are increased strength, explosiveness, and strength endurance.

That is to say that you should do resistance training (RT), with the most effective type of RT being weight training.

The best thing? You DON'T need a complex plan - Just stick to the basics.

The basic, compound strength exercises are - Presses, Squats, Deadlifts & Pulls.

Gaining Muscle During The New Year

Think:

1. Bench presses under different angles
2. Overhead presses
3. Barbell squats
4. Dumbbell squats
5. Machine squats
6. Barbell/dumbbell deadlifts
7. Pull-ups
8. Pull-downs
9. T-Bar rows
10. Dumbbell rows

All of these exercises, done under the right intensity (challenging weights) will easily create a stimulus for muscle growth.

- **Progressive Overload!**

Besides picking the right exercises and doing them at the right levels of intensity, you have to make sure that you are increasing the endured load with time.

Progressive overload is a fundamental training principle, which muscle growth depends on.

This principle simply implies creating new and new stimuli for your muscles.

To do so, you can go a couple of routes:

1. Increasing the working weight
2. Increasing the number of repetitions
3. Increasing time under tension (doing movements slower)

- **Rest Appropriately!**

One of the common misconceptions about muscle gaining is that you have to be restless at the gym - Supersets, giant sets, triple sets, etc. However, the truth is the exact opposite - Muscle gains are mostly about rest...

Rest times between sets and rest times between workouts.

Think of it this way - Intense activity like weight lifting is strenuous and thus, your performance may decline quickly, set to set.

For instance, if you do a set of bench pressing with 50 kg for ten reps and only rest a minute, odds are you will only get 8-9 reps on the next set, then 7-8 on the 3rd set etc.

However, if you rest 2-3 minutes after the first set, it is much more likely to sustain your performance in the next sets, thus increasing the total amount of weight lifted (3 sets of 30 total reps done over 10 minutes are better than three sets of 20-something reps done over 5 minutes).

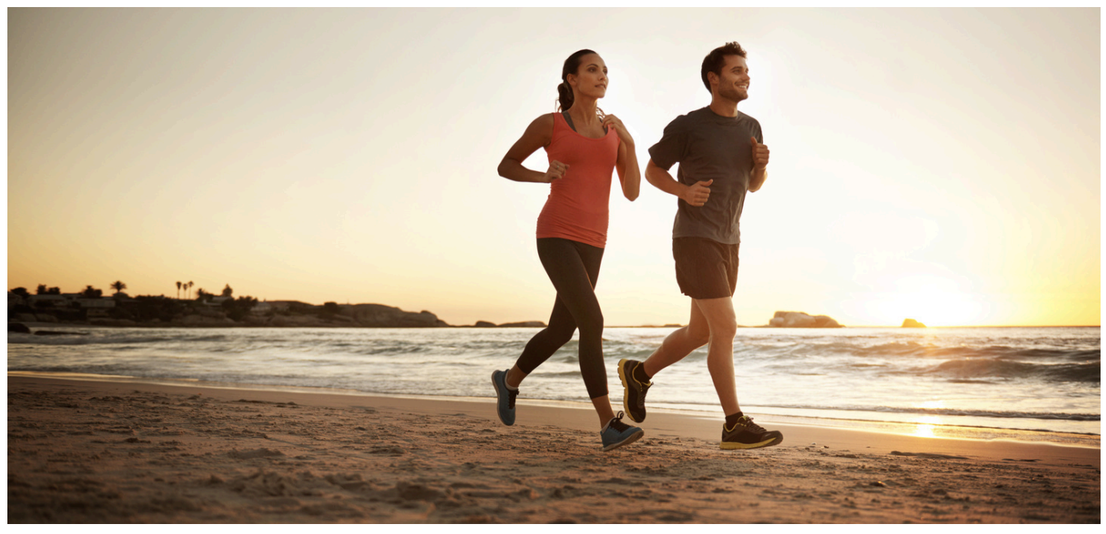
Besides that, your rest between workouts is crucial! Aim to rest 48-96 hours before training the same muscle group again, as that will leave enough room for recovery and for your body to prepare to do MORE!

Becoming Healthier - The Challenge!



Whether you are trying to lose fat or gain muscle mass, the goal is one and the same - Becoming healthier and becoming the best version of yourself.

Both fat loss (getting into a balanced body composition) and muscle gains have benefits for your health that must not be ignored.



Whatever the goal, don't just focus on looking better, but instead, consider that the changes you induce in your activity levels and nutrition will lead to a better quality of life overall.

So here is your new year's challenge:

- Become aware of your current physical and mental state
- Become aware of your current habits and patterns
- CHOOSE to be more active (weights, cardio, yoga, stretching, etc.)
- CHOOSE quality food sources
- Sustain those habits and make them something regular.
- CHOOSE to be your best self

Are you ready? Let's smash those resolutions!





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