

# **NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION** HANDBOOK





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# Introduction

It's that time again, everyone. Get ready to write a list of awesome new year's resolutions that you're going to forget about before March rolls around. I know that's harsh, but it's the truth for the majority of resolutioners.

This phenomenon is probably the most well-known in the fitness world. People flock to gyms on January 1<sup>st</sup> to buy a membership, hire a personal trainer, attend group fitness classes, and all that good stuff. Then after a month of failure, they quit.

You're not going to be that person this year. You're not going to quit. Wanna

know why? Because of this guide, and a guy named Adam. Over the next few pages, we're going to follow a regular guy as he pursues his new year's resolutions for 2016.

In each chapter, you'll experience some of the struggles that Adam will face throughout the year. But don't worry – he tackles them again and again. By the time we're done, you're going to be even better than Adam.

Are you on board? Good. Adam has a few resolutions, but we're only going to focus on the most important one. Let's check it out.



## ADAM'S NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION FOR 2016:

*Compete in a powerlifting competition by the end of the year.*



# GOAL SETTING 101:

## A GOAL WITHOUT A PLAN IS A WISH

The reality of goal setting is that it's difficult. It's a process that requires you to simultaneously assess where you're currently at, create a list of possible places you might like to go, narrow down that list of places, formulate an action plan to get you to those places, then actually put in the work to make it happen.

It's a mouthful, just like that sentence.

Maybe I'm being overly dramatic. Let's take a step back for a second. Goal setting is difficult, but it doesn't have to be impossible. Adam is here to show you what I mean. He's ready to rock his new year's resolution, but he knows he needs a plan first. Here are the steps he followed to create that plan...

**Step 1: Adam chose one major "goal area" to focus on within his resolution. After some soul searching, he realized that he's anxious about competing because of his bench press.**

*Adam's Goal Area: Bench Press*

**Step 2: Adam identified one "micro goal" within that goal area. He's pretty comfortable with his bench press technique, but he isn't happy with his current numbers.**

*Micro Goal: Get a bigger bench press*

**Step 3: Adam found a "bright spot" – something he was already doing well – that related to his goal. He asked himself a big question: Am I already doing anything that can help me achieve my goal?**

*Bright Spot: I've been slowly improving my bench press numbers over the last few months. I think it's because of all the extra triceps work I've been doing.*

**Step 4: Adam is totally going to keep doing that extra triceps work. I mean, why not? Use the things you're already doing right to your advantage.**

**Step 5: Adam chose one action step that he could take daily or weekly to help him achieve his goal.**

*Action Step: Adam looked over his training and realized that he's been doing the exact same type of bench press for three months. He thinks he'll benefit from switching over to the pause bench press for a few weeks. He's going to do that.*

As Adam moves forward, he'll regularly assess how his action steps are working. If pause bench press screwed everything up and now he's weaker, he'll adjust for it by creating a new action step. It's simple, but effective.



## THE TAKEAWAY:

Create a flexible plan that you can tweak as you go. You don't have to plan for everything, but always cover the basics.

# BE SPECIFIC, BUT BE CAREFUL

There's going to come a point during the year when you have to ask yourself another big question: How specific do my goals need to be? Ideally, you'll address this sooner rather than later.

Adam realized that maybe "get a bigger bench press" and "compete in a powerlifting competition by the end of the year" weren't specific enough. I tend to agree – bigger bench press could mean an improvement of 5 kilos or 50 kilos.

He sat down with his handy new year's resolutions notebook and took a stab at setting some more specific parameters. Here's what he came up with...

*I'm going to compete in the XZY Powerlifting Showdown on September 10th I want to increase my bench press by 50 kilos before the competition*

That's better, right? He's chosen a specific powerlifting competition to satisfy his overall new year's resolutions, and he's set a specific number that he wants to increase his bench press by. You don't have to use numbers, but they're an easy way to attach a more specific quality to a goal.



## THE TAKEAWAY:

You don't have to be as specific as you can with your resolutions and goals, but it doesn't hurt to try.



# REACH FOR THE STARS... BUT KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND

It's okay to aim big. In fact, it's absolutely encouraged to aim big. Adam definitely set his sights high with his goal of increasing his bench press by 50 kilos. That's a huge number.

How do I know it's a huge number? I know because I made up Adam and I can create whatever context I want. With that being said, Adam is already a pretty strong guy. He can bench press 100 kilos on any given day, and on a good day probably a bit more.

Unfortunately, Adam isn't living in reality. The chances of him achieving a 50 kilo increase in his bench press in eight or nine months isn't very good. If he was a beginner, sure – that's doable. But as an intermediate or advanced lifter, it's not going to happen.

Adam realized this, too, after a paltry 5 kilo increase over the first two months of the year. Not bad at all with the weight he's already moving, but not good enough to hit 50 by the end of the year.

Adam decided to scale back and came up with a new number:

*I want to increase my bench press by 20 kilos before the competition.*

This number is much more realistic. With a 5 kilo increase after two months, he's on track to hit 20 (if things keep going well) by the time of the competition.



## THE TAKEAWAY:

Aim high, but not too high, and don't be afraid to alter your goals as you move forward.

# DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP: SORE TOMORROW OR SORRY TOMORROW?



This thought tends to go against the grain in the fitness industry. No pain, no gain, am I right? Actually, I'm completely wrong. Forget that you read that.

It's April now and Adam is rocking his way towards his goal of improving his bench press, and his bigger resolution of competing in the powerlifting competition in September. In fact, he's doing so well that he decided to spend more time in the gym working on his bench press.

This is a classic example of getting too excited about your progress and unknowingly derailing it. A month later, from Adam's workout log:

*I just tried to test my bench press max and it's the lowest I've put up all year. I don't get it.*

Adam doesn't get it, and most people don't get it. He was kicking ass and taking names, but decided to change things anyway. He got excited. Super excited. I understand that – we've all been there.

But you have to reign it in. Ride the fantastic feelings that come with flying towards your goals, but don't let those feelings overwhelm you. It's all about baby steps.

## THE TAKEAWAY:

Don't get carried away, even if you're rocking it. Too much of a good thing often becomes a bad thing.



# KEEP TRYING: FALL DOWN 7, GET UP 8

It's called failing forward. It's a process you've probably already experienced in any number of other aspects of your life. The immediate reaction is that failing is bad, and that's all that matters.

I'm here to tell you no, that's not true at all. I know Adam has my back on this. September rolled around and was pumped for the powerlifting competition. Unfortunately, it was canceled last minute. He looked for another chance, but that was the last competition of the year in his area.

Adam was crushed.

He told one of his friends the story of his new year's resolution journey. He told his

friend that he failed. Then, surprisingly, his friend looked at him and said...

*"Failed, are you crazy? You improved your bench press by 25 kilos in less than a year! That's awesome! Sure, you didn't get to compete, but that wasn't even your fault."*

Adam's friend was absolutely right. It's true that he failed because he didn't achieve his resolution: Compete in a powerlifting competition by the end of the year. But, honestly, does that really matter next to the other things he's managed to achieve?

Not one damn bit.

A photograph of a man's muscular torso, showing his chest, shoulders, and arms. The man is shirtless, and his skin is tanned. The image is positioned behind a blue callout box.

## THE TAKEAWAY:

Every time you fail at something, ask yourself if that failure has any hidden benefit. Chances are, it does.

# PARTING THOUGHTS



Adam's story may not be real, but I guarantee there's someone out there that has been or will be in a similar situation. Of course, he managed to succeed (mostly) in the end. That's not the case with everyone.

I don't think success is the only reason to set new year's resolutions, or goals of any kind. It's a good measurement in some cases, but not here. Resolutions have the ability to teach you about yourself. More importantly, they can take you out of your comfort zone and build confidence.

If I were you, I'd take Adam's story to heart. He went through some of the most common problems that prevent people from sticking

with their resolutions. This is great news for you. Now you're wiser. I don't think you're going to make the same mistakes that Adam made. I'm confident that you'll do the things he did well even better.

If you don't, that's okay, too. If there's one part of this guide that you truly take to heart, let it be the one about failing forward. Life is a constant tale of failing forward, and you're the star. Learn from everything you do wrong and build off of it. Maybe you won't accomplish your resolutions this year, but it just might be that experience that helps you crush your resolutions next year.

Good luck.