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MAINTENANCE GUIDE

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Maintenance Guide

OK, so you've busted your butt, you put in a lot of hard work and made a ton of sacrifices. Through all that sweat equity, you finally achieved the body that you've been wanting. Now what? Well, the last thing you want to do is come off of that high and go back to what you used to be. So here is some important information on how to keep what you worked feverishly hard to get.

Old-conditioned Patterns

This might take a minute to sink in, but it is very true and cannot be denied. Believe it or not, every single worry, fear, doubt and problem you have is due to old-conditioned patterns resurfacing. Here's an example so you fully understand this concept.

Several years ago, you were overweight and out of shape. You started exercising and eating right, but went to a party and lost control. The next day you woke up and said the heck with it, and went right back to your old ways. You then gained back the little bit of weight you lost and were right back in your old patterns.

Fast forward to the present and you were able to stick out a healthy program. You lost a ton of weight, you look great, you feel great and your energy levels are really high. Then you got an invitation to a party much like the original one you went to. There is a spread of food, adult beverages and desserts staring at you just like last time. You eat, drink and are sociable for the entire night and wake up the next day...

Here is where people get in trouble and you need to persevere and stay disciplined. You will be very tempted to fall back into the same spot you were a while ago because you expect that to happen! That's the part about old conditioned patterns resurfacing.

Stop that madness immediately! You obviously have the willpower to make monumental changes, so don't allow yourself to get swept off the wagon, never to return again.

Come to the realization that slip-ups are bound to occur. You are human. Just also know that you have the ability to dust yourself off and get right back on track in a flash.

Even go one step farther and allow yourself a cheat meal or cheat day every week. Use it as a reward system to keep yourself motivated to stay on track on the other days of the week.

Also, be really cautious of people, places and things that have brought you down in the past. Certain restaurants, areas of town and bars can trigger your unhealthy senses and make you weak. If you don't think it's a good idea to walk past Johnny's Doughnut Shop because you used to stop in there after work, then go another route.

You have to be careful of the people you fraternize with too. There are some people who are very supportive and there are others who will far extend themselves to drag you down and sabotage everything you worked hard for. These are the people who lack the discipline to do it themselves and it drives them crazy to see you succeed. So they will go to extremes to bring you back down to their level. Don't fall for it!

They are negativity vampires and they won't think twice about sucking the momentum right out of your body. If you are strong enough, remember that no matter what they say, it's just words. It's only your interpretation or acceptance of those words that can do any harm.



Chi Hit

If you do fall off the wagon and need a little motivation to recapture your momentum, try this on for size. Place pictures of your old self nearby in all the areas you will be during the day. Even put one in your pocket.

When you fall of course, take a nice long look at one of those pictures and think about what you went through back then. How did you feel physically? How were your energy levels? What did you see in the mirror? Answer those questions honestly and you will likely come up with motivation not to return to that place.

The Sweet Spot

No, this is not the name of a new pastry shop down the road. It's the place you need to go to keep yourself happy and feeling good. Simply put, your expectations could be too high to maintain for the rest of your life.

You might have spent six months getting up at 5am to work out, prepping meals and fitting in walks after work for extra calorie burning, but this "thing" called life always catches up to you.

Your kid's missed soccer games, the avoidance of family functions and the grind of doing two-hour workouts every day is likely not sustainable long-term. That's why you need to find the "sweet spot."

Under most circumstances, it's people's dietary habits that send them spiraling back out of control. Do some experimentation with your diet and exercise schedule that will allow you to maintain your body.

This means you may not have to do as high-intensity workouts as you once did to keep your body in good shape. And you may also be able to binge a little more with your diet. Going to the extreme was part of a different phase that you have already paid your dues for.

You likely now have more muscle mass, which is metabolically active tissue. You can get away with eating more calories while not gaining weight.

At this point, it's really more about creating awareness of how your body responds to food and exercise, and going with a plan that creates work/home-life balance and harmony.



Competition

On the other side of the coin, you may now be obsessed with the feeling you get from exercise and eating clean. There is nothing wrong with that at all. In this case, you might want to go the other direction and sign up for a competition.

This is a great way to force yourself to stay on track; especially if there is a fee involved. Knowing that you spent money to enter might give you added motivation to see it through.

The list of competitions out there is large and growing. Focus on something that you enjoy. If you love weight training, sign up for a figures competition. If you love to run, do a 5K or half marathon. If you like circuit training and testing your body to its max, there is no shortage of obstacle course races. Just choose an event you will look forward to training for on a daily basis and you'll have the motivation you need to stay on track.

Buddy System

Positive reinforcement is always a good thing when you are first starting out, but do not dismiss this once you've reached your goal weight or body size. Creating a buddy system, for example, is a great way to maintain what you've accomplished.

Find someone to work out with, attend classes with and who will hold you accountable to stay on track with your diet. Look for someone who's in a similar position as you so you can hold each other accountable. The best case scenario is you went through the changes with your spouse and you can continually keep each other on track.

In some instances, people NEED to work out with someone or they won't do it at all. They just feel more comfortable in a partner or group situation. This is often due to self-consciousness, but sometimes they just feel more motivated when someone's with them. If that's what works for you, then go with it! There really is no wrong answer here.



Hire a Trainer

Perhaps the greatest motivator of them all is a personal trainer. It would be especially in your best interest to hire a trainer if you did in fact sign up for an event. In this case, look for someone who has specific experience in that event and has either trained a lot of others for it or did it themselves. It wouldn't make sense to hire a trainer skilled in Brazilian jiu-jitsu if you are training for a speed-walking event.

Just in general purposes, a trainer can help you too. If you schedule one or two weekly appointments with them, you will always have someone to check in on you. They can also fill that void of not having motivation and put to rest your fear of working out alone.

Additionally, they can get you really dialed in with proper form and programming. You might've been just winging it all along and that's something you never want to do.

Be selective when you choose a trainer too. There is no shortage of them, but there is also no shortage of good and just plain bad ones. A good trainer will show up on time, be positive, motivating, happy and have a solid skill set that is obvious by his actions.

He does not try to get attention, act like he knows everything about everything and he does not spend most of his sessions sending text messages. He just does his thing and does it well, and gets noticed for that.

A bad trainer, on the other hand, does the complete opposite of the good trainer. And they sometimes look disgruntled. But more often than not, they are arrogant and self-righteous. And for the love of everything holy, never hire a trainer that is loud and likes to scream at you. They shouldn't even be allowed in the gym!

Lastly, make sure your trainer walks the walk as well as talks the talk. Far too often, they are out of shape themselves or at least barely ever work out. Do you really want to be told how to do a Turkish get-up by someone who never does them themselves? Of course you don't. Make sure they have a proven track record and even consult with some of their past clients. They would know better than anyone if they are worth your time and a good fit for you.



Closing Comments

Always remember that any progress is good progress. You will have obstacles, you will run into roadblocks and there will be days where you will feel defeated. Just shake it off and realize that it's all temporary. Forgive yourself if you slip up and move forward without looking back.

Anyone can succeed when the going is easy. But it's a true mark of excellence when you overcome adversity and find a way to win no matter how far the odds are stacked against you.

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