

## **GET MOVING! GET FIT!**

**By Jeanne Strauss, LCSW**

As a former couch potato, I understand exactly why you are not in the shape you want to be. For years (decades) I really wanted to be fitter, stronger and healthier. I thought it was a problem of discipline. But every time I tried to get fit I was only successful for brief periods of time. And then, I figured out how to change my results. Over the course of a year I progressed from someone who went for a short walk once in a while, to someone who finished a marathon (26.2 miles) using a run/walk interval.

Whatever *your* fitness goal, the process is the same as the one I used.

1. Make only one small (tiny) change each week, and plan it in advance.
2. Surround yourself with encouraging people (at least one).
3. Correct your self image as you go, so your thinking lines up with the new you not the old you.
4. Set up your accountability system.

Not surprisingly, this same process works for any goal. Whether its fitness, healthy eating, improving your business, learning to play an instrument, or getting control of your anger.

Most people make the mistake of trying to change too much too fast. We can do that only for a short time and then we slip, get discouraged, slip some more and are right back where we started. We make changes best when we do it a little bit at a time until it becomes an automatic part of our life. Choose one tiny change for this week. Write it down. Tell another person what it is. Do it. Report it as a success.

Supportive people who encourage us are an important ingredient. It is more difficult to fail if someone else will know about it. Sometimes a spouse or best friend is not unconditionally encouraging. We can either teach them to be so, or we can find another support person. If you choose a partner who has the same goals you do and use each other for support and accountability, you can take care of two steps at once.

Correct as you go means that you must change your thinking to line up with the new you. When we change our *self* we must also change our *self-image*. If we forget that step, we will eventually resume the behaviors that match the old self image we hung on to.

Accountability is a must. If another person expects you to be there, is waiting for a report on your success, or will ask you how you did, it provides the “show up factor”. You can get this “show up factor” by hiring a personal trainer, joining a

support group, partnering with someone who has similar goals, or working with a counselor or life coach.

*Order my “Get Moving! Get Fit: Your personal workbook for 52 weeks to fitness”. In it you will find the tools you need to assess where you are today, plan where you want to be in a year, and all 52 weekly changes needed to get you there. You can organize the workbook in the order that best fits your goals, mood and personal style. There is built in planning for vacations, easy weeks for when you are busy, harder weeks for when you feel strong, charts for tracking your progress, help for falling off the plan and getting back on it, rewards for your success, support resources, and lots of encouragement. You can apply the 52 steps whether you are currently a couch potato or already fit and wanting to be fitter.*