

Post Holiday Blues? Feeling sluggish? Harness that energy.... Become SMART

We all know the pattern. We work hard at our jobs, even harder in the run up to the two weeks annual leave and then enjoy our well-earned break.

On our return, we can experience that post-holiday feeling and perhaps a tinge of regret that we brought more back from our holiday than a few photographs in the form of a couple of pounds in body fat.

The difficulty is how to get started and be ready to face the return to normal life, return to work and the prospect of autumn on the horizon. Now is the time to sit down with a pad and pen and give yourself some quiet time. You need to consider your goals and your targets. Write them down and consider them, slowly and carefully. Make sure that you set yourself goals that you consider exciting, real, tangible and most importantly, achievable. Be honest with yourself about what you can really achieve.

Consider your goals as your long term objectives, your real desires and hopes for the long term. These can be health related goals and consider any goals that your GP or Hospital Consultant has discussed with you. Your goals may be a little more personal to do with your next holiday, family gathering or a looming social event. If you are dreading an event when people will want to take photographs, write it down. Don't be worried about being vain; if you want to consider more personal cosmetic issues, they count just as much.

Now you have a real list of goals which mean something to you. If you only have one or two items on the list, that's good. If you have five or six items, that will work too. Remember, that these are long term so there is no maximum number on the list.

Now we need to consider how to achieve this list of goals. So we do that by creating a second list. This list will be your aims. Aims are the tools that we use to achieve our goals or

objectives. Another way to describe aims is to use the word 'targets.' The words themselves don't matter too much as long as you create those two lists in your head. You are now on a journey. The destination is at the end of the road, that is your goal. Your road to that goal is populated by targets or 'road signs'. Every time you pass a target or 'road sign' be ready to congratulate yourself.

You are now ready to begin identifying those targets. You may want to lose body fat, you may want to be fitter, and you may want to develop some healthier habits. Whatever your target, be accepting of the fact that you need to develop new habits and make changes. This is when it gets tough. Changing habits is hard and no-one finds it easy. You must make sure that the habits you identify that you consider that need changing are of a type that you believe that you can change. Be realistic with yourself and be kind to yourself. Don't be idealistic about joining a gym if you have a Lycra phobia, find gyms intimidating places & struggle with motivation to keep attending? Many of us do. However, you could find out about Academy 4 Wellbeing One 2 One personally tailored packages or try Wellbeing Bootcamps if you wish to share this cost in a group environment and have some fun. www.academy4wellbeing.com

If you wish to quit smoking, ask others how they did it, ask your GP surgery or local pharmacy for help but if you have tried to quit before on your own, and didn't succeed, be ready and open to trying something different this time.

You will only be successful in changing your habits if your new habits are to your liking. Changing a habit into a form of punishment is not going to last.

Begin with making small changes which you enjoy and can live with. Feel impressed with yourself for making the change, however small, but feel satisfied that you have proved that you can make changes. That is a first, small but very important step. Now you can build on your confidence. Keep reminding yourself of the long term goals and if your target is a little off, reset and start again, but revisit your goals to keep you motivated.

Target setting or noting the road signs along the way can include a variety of measures. You may be trying to lose weight but don't rely on the bathroom scales too much. They only weigh body weight. Judge your success by your clothes being looser, or your trouser belt moving a notch, or have your body composition taken at The Academy 4 Wellbeing, including your body fat%, lean/fat free mass and muscle content. The health benefits to losing weight may be the non-visible measures such as Blood Pressure, reducing your cholesterol or reducing your risk of diabetes. You may also wish to measure these risk factors so that you have a baseline to help you with your goal setting.

Losing body fat can improve breathing problems; reduce snoring at night and increase stamina. Can you notice how easily you can walk up and down stairs following some changes to your lifestyle? It may not have been on the original goals list but you can go back and revisit it.

Many people notice a relief in joint pain or back pain following changes to their lifestyle. Enjoy the relief from discomfort and congratulate yourself for making changes. The energy to carry on towards your goals is from achieving your small targets along the way.

In summary, you need to develop a SMART plan

Be

SPECIFIC - develop a clear plan of action and stick with it. Be prepared to revise it

MEASURABLE – assess your progress and keep motivated. Be a critic of yourself but not too harsh. Be kind to yourself.

AGREED- if you want family, friends, colleagues to support you, tell them what you are doing so that they understand your goals and targets are challenging but achievable.

REALISTIC - Make sure that you can do it. Set small targets towards the big goal.

TIME SPECIFIC- Set a time limit and review your progress. Your success is the review, it is not essential to achieve everything. If necessary, rewrite your goals and targets and carry on.

Start your journey to a slimmer, healthier, fitter you today by booking a **FREE CONSULTATION** so we can tailor a One 2 One health, fitness & fat loss programme to suit your individual needs, time & budget or claim a **FREE TASTER** on our Wellbeing Bootcamps. A new you is just a call away. 0845 686 0444 www.academy4wellbeing.com