



SUCCESS TOOLS



EXPERTS SHARE HOW TO ACHIEVE WELLNESS GOALS By Dawn Liles

Walk into any gym or fitness center in Ballantyne the first week in January and there may not be an open elliptical or treadmill. But wait a few months, and suddenly the parking lot is no longer full. Why are goals and resolutions made at the start of a new year often

abandoned by summer? And how can people stay on track, thereby living more fulfilling lives?

Ballantyne Magazine consulted with a life coach, a fitness and wellness coach and a successful Weight Watchers participant to learn the best ways to approach and stick to goals. Here are their tips.



one

One of the first steps is to **rethink the whole "resolution" concept**, says life coach Kathryn "Kabee" Kokenes. "Tying goals to a magical day or specific time of the year doesn't work well for most people," says Kokenes. "Renewal is available to all of us, all of the time, not just on a specific day."

two

Kokenes recommends a change in how people approach goal setting. Goals should be positive and full of self-compassion, she says. "I encourage my clients to find a community they are comfortable with and to **keep goals positive**: 'I want to be healthier,' not 'I want to lose 40 pounds,'" says Kokenes. The first goal is easier to control and more motivating."



Visualization has proven to be a powerful tool to help people stick to goals. "**Make a vision board**," says Kokenes. "This is what I want my life to look like. Write down what you wish for yourself. When you become more mindful of what you want, subconsciously you are more likely to notice opportunities to make that happen."



three



Another key to success is to **break down goals into actionable steps**. For example, says Kokenes, "If you hate to work out, then an actionable step for you would be to place your workout clothes and shoes right next to the bed, so the first thing you do in the morning is step into your workout gear."

five

Additionally, says Kokenes, use a calendar to **mark down goals and track them**. "Phone apps are also great check-ins for people," she says, "and some provide positive reinforcement — like a blue dot on the Weight Watchers app that shows you met your goal for that day."

four





SIX

Another tool to help people stick to their fitness goals is available at the 19-branch YMCA of Greater Charlotte. The8colorsoffitness.com helps members use the power of their fitness personalities to create exercise programs to which they can stick. Participants are asked to answer a series of questions that compare two statements and then decide which is truer for him/her.

According to Senior Health and Wellness Director Natalie Daniels and Fitness Experience Coordinator Brett Ager, results of the test have been helpful to **tailor individual workout programs**, thus boosting members' chances of succeeding with fitness goals.

Says Daniels, "My fitness profile says I like structure and consider working out to be like work, so it should be scheduled and set up in advance. On the other hand, my husband considers exercise to be fun, so for him, it should be varied and spontaneous. Knowing these differences can help people plan workouts that match their personalities and more naturally fit into their daily routine."

SEVEN

Marvin resident Heather Ladue practices many goal-setting techniques that Kokenes and Daniels espouse. "My friends and I **cheer each other's successes**," she says. Ladue attends weekly meetings at Weight Watchers in the Ballantyne area and has lost more than 25 pounds. She also tracks her daily progress on the Weight Watchers app and occasionally uses a free smartphone app called MyFitnessPal.



Ladue is also making herself accountable in a new way: by posting about it on social media. Nearly every week, she posts a picture of a green chair from her Weight Watchers meeting, along with how much weight she has lost, gained or maintained that week.

Having a tie to social media where anyone in her friend group can check in on her has made Ladue more accountable, which she says has helped her **stay on a steady track**. "I used to like to see how quickly I could lose weight," says Ladue. "But now I'm more aware of slow and steady and noticing when and what I eat." ⑩

eight

Y Programs Aid Goal Attainment

In addition to the8colorsoffitness, the YMCA of Greater Charlotte offers these programs to help members stick to their goals:



Weight-Loss Groups

Made up of six to seven people who meet in a classroom setting once a week for 12 weeks to discuss topics such as goal setting, sleep, stress, nutrition and more. Meets at Sara's YMCA.



Health Coaching

A health coach provides an ongoing conversation in person, on the phone or over email to help set goals, create action steps and transform routines. Available at both Morrison Family YMCA and Sara's Y.



Wellness Lectures

A free lecture every Tuesday at noon at Sara's YMCA, during which local health professionals discuss topics such as diabetes, preventive health screenings and injury prevention. Broadcast live from www.facebook.com/SarasYMCA.