



A Fitness Solution For a New Life's Resolution

By Robert J. Schwander
Fitness Counseling, Inc.

A fitness solution can help bring about a new life's resolution. Putting together a fitness solution first and foremost is up to you. Research and decide what type of fitness program will meet your needs. No one knows your body better than you. If you have special needs, you must select a conditioning routine that will be appropriate for the level of condition you are in. Once you and your physician determine your level of conditioning, create a program that will gently elevate you physically. If you

push yourself too fast and too hard, it may lead to a setback. A setback can be discouraging and disappointing, leaving you unsure and can put you back on the sidelines for a period of time or worse delay or halt your progress. It is crucial towards your success that your program is the right solution to help you reach your goals safely and effectively.

Once you find the right program, you must develop a positive mental attitude with a strong desire to succeed. If your physical needs are greater than

your desire it can lead to resistance in willingness to achieve your goals. In other words, if you are doing it because you feel you have to or because you were told you have to it may generate a feeling of discomfort. If that is the case, you must build a strong desire to succeed. A bigger desire will bring you higher but with a small desire, the smallest setback will put out the fire. As noted, desire is one of the key components that will propel you on your fitness journey.

To better understand desire, you can view it in this manner. If you had not eaten any food for a period of several days, your most dominant urge would be to find food. You would do whatever it took in your quest to nourish your body. The same goes for developing a desire to succeed in the realm of fitness. As noted, desire is the first component towards your success.

The second component is definiteness of purpose. Definiteness of purpose in this case would mean honing in on your fitness mission. Defining your fitness mission will help you establish your goals. Establishing goals will help you determine a fitness regimen that will meet your needs.

The third component on your fitness journey is persistence. In order to maximize your success you must be persistent. This means you must follow through on a regular

basis without allowing excuses and distractions to limit your success.

This next component, being the fourth, is extremely important for you to understand and possess. If you do not have it, you must develop it. The component is patience. Having a substantial amount of patience will enable you to gently reach your goals.

If you successfully incorporate the four components with a personalized fitness regimen you will be on your way to reaching your goals. When embarking on your quest for success, create a fitness program that will change your life not take over your life. If you are unsure how to develop a fitness program that will meet your personal needs, then consult with a fitness specialist. There are many fitness specialists that can help you with your needs. When searching for a fitness specialist the most important attribute to look for is their results record or in other words their success stories. Don't be shy in asking them to see testimonials and talk to clients that have achieved their goals.

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A New Year's Resolution or A Fitness Regimen That Can Save Your Life

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

In over 20 years of training, I have never experienced a more inspiring experience than what I am about to share with you. This story has been locked away and guarded in my heart for almost 10 years. Strangely enough, although I was an accomplished competitive natural bodybuilder and a freelance trainer at West Point Military Academy, helping America's elite become strong in mind and strong in body, I had very little to do with the survival and success of the person dearest to my heart. Only her will, which was of iron, propelled her to survive and then thrive.

I believe it was 1992; I was vacationing at Point Pleasant, New Jersey. About two days into the vacation, I received a phone call stating, 'You better get home. It's your mother. She had a severe stroke and it doesn't look good.' The next day I was at Cornwall Hospital. I remember that moment as clear as day. I was walking up the concrete steps and I was trembling inside and out. By the

time I reached the receptionist I could hardly talk. I located her room and I saw her from a glance — she was in a coma-like state. I took a deep breath while walking forward. I silently said, 'I know I haven't been praying much lately, but all I ask is, if you decide to take her, please give me the strength to handle it.'

At that moment I reached her bedside and I felt the most amazing and assuring sensation flow over my body. I knew with total confidence that she was going to be all right. I reached down and grabbed her hand and said out loud, 'You are strong, you are positive and you are powerful.' Then I let go of her hand and left the hospital.

It was about a month later, my mom was sent to the same hospital where I did three semesters of fieldwork for dietetic technology. At the time, Helen Hayes Hospital was one of the best rehabilitation hospitals in the country. I went to visit her thinking in my mind how happy she will be to see me. I walked

into the main lobby which is massive and set up mainly for visiting patients. From a distance I noticed a woman in a wheelchair shuffling her feet back and forth like she was on a mission. I walked closer and realized it was my mother. I called out to her and said, 'Mom, it's good to see you.' Without blinking an eye she said in a stern voice, 'I cannot talk to you. I have got to go do my therapy.'

I was a bit confused to see her turn me down for her therapy, but I realized it was her will to live that was stronger than companionship, so I said some words of encouragement. 'Mom, you are going to be all right.'

She then turned to me and said, 'I know I am, because I am strong, I am positive, and I am powerful' and turned and shuffled away.

I was amazed she said those words. Then again, it all was amazing since I recall the doctors saying that she would not live and if she does live, she will never walk, talk or be able to feed herself.

She learned to walk, talk and take care of herself the best she could with the stroke and she wanted to learn how to drive again. Once more the doctors said she will never be able to drive. With a little bit of my agitating help and her iron will she did learn to drive again.

Simply amazing. . . never, ever, not even once did I ever

hear her complain. Never once did I ever see her give in or give up on anything she attempted to accomplish. Even a setback of a severe stroke could not keep her on the sideline of life. I was astonished to see a woman who never exercised or really took care of herself nutritionally create such a dramatic change in lifestyle. Every single day she ate extremely well, took special supplementation for her specific needs, and continued to do her therapeutic exercises an hour every day. She also did 40 minutes of stationary bike, 200 crunches and lifted weights every single day without allowing any situation to generate a distraction from her life's goal. Amazingly she did everything it took to survive and then thrive.

I once asked her how she generated so much energy to exercise, jump in a car and travel from Arizona to New York, travel around the country and see so many things and do so many things such as volunteer at a local hospital, volunteer teaching English and so much more. She replied, 'I refuse to sit around and feel sorry for myself and wait to die. I want to live life to the fullest.'

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Regain Your Life With a Fitness Solution Experience Life Again

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am privileged to share with you a remarkable story of a remarkable woman who refused to allow a physical setback defeat her in life. For the last 10 years, I have had a wonderful opportunity of assisting Virginia H. with her fitness regimen. I am pleased to say that she is doing phenomenally well.

However, as recently as a year ago, this was not the case. I recall a period of eight months in which she did not enter the fitness center once. I asked her daughter, Karen, who is an occupational therapist, how she

was doing and to my surprise, learned that she had taken a hard fall. I called Virginia to check on her and she assured me that when she was feeling better she would return. I found out later that the extent of Virginia's fall was pretty severe. I also learned the facts of her fall. She was taking out the garbage at 5 AM and slipped, falling hard. Virginia realized a few days later that there was something wrong. Time passed and the extent of her fall brought forth injuries that would completely limit her mobility. In a short period, Virginia

went from being completely independent to someone who had to rely on others for things she found so easy to do in the past.

Prior to her fall Virginia frequented our fitness center two or three times per week. She would meet her daughter, Karen, at the fitness center and they would exercise together. It must have been very difficult for her to endure this setback that changed her life. She told me she had a real tough time with being limited. But deep down she knew that she would either find the strength or create the strength to go forward. Virginia took the setback one day at a time and had to continue to rely on other people to help her and drive her where she wanted to go.

Virginia realized she had to allow her body time to heal. To no avail, her daughter, Karen, continually tried to persuade Virginia to come with her to the fitness center. Time passed and all the while I would ask Karen how Virginia was doing. Virginia would only say that she needed to get back on her fitness regimen. It was about eight months later after her fall that I asked Karen to tell Virginia to come see me and that I would take care of her. Virginia agreed and I started training her two times a week.

Since she did little physically during those eight months to sustain what she had gained with her fitness regimen of the past 10 years, Virginia realized she had some work to do to

get back to the level that she was before she had fallen. As a trainer, I thoroughly evaluated her condition and together we created a fitness program tailored for her needs. Amazingly, in a very short period of time, Virginia excelled and within a month her true glow and wonderful smile re-appeared. After six weeks, Virginia was looking very strong again and I recall that at one of our last one-on-one personal training sessions, she surprised me by pulling up in her car driving for the first time in over eight months. This was truly one of those moments when my job as a professional trainer made me realize that this is truly what I need to be doing. Now in no way, shape, or form am I saying that she succeeded solely because of a fitness center or specific fitness regimen. However, I will say she truly succeeded because of her internal strength and courage. I am truly proud of her work ethic that propels her forward.

I am happy to say that Virginia and her daughter, Karen, are once again frequenting the fitness center together. Furthermore, I am pleased to say it was wonderful celebrating Virginia's 80th birthday.

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A Superstar In The Making

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

We all have a general idea of what it takes to be a superstar or a hero. On a daily basis we are reminded of the game winners and life changers. I will be sharing with you a very special person who in my eyes is a true superstar.

Families who have a special needs child are acutely aware of the daily strength and patience that is needed in dealing with the challenges. Siblings are also affected by this daily struggle. Imagine such a boy who struggles not only with the stress of living but also the stress of living with a special needs sibling. Now imagine that same young man who digs deep within himself to find the strength necessary to improve both his body and mind. In my eyes, Karl Winek is truly a superstar.

I have been fortunate enough for the past 15 years to be able to train Karl's parents, Dr. Sally Jo Winek and Dr. Ron Winek. During that time, I didn't know much about Karl except for a few encounters when his mom brought him to the fitness center. As a small child, he seemed a little impatient and self-absorbed. Wow, did Karl completely change. Now a young man, Karl has transformed himself into a responsible student and a wonderful son.

My true encounter with Karl was little over a year ago. Dr. Sally Jo Winek was training with me at the fitness facility. She voiced concern that her son, Karl, appeared to be extremely underweight. She seemed to be upset with this condition. I asked her if perhaps Karl's being underweight was due to the fact that he was growing taller. She said she didn't think so, so I asked her to bring Karl in and I would evaluate him. I remember the day she

brought Karl to see me. I noticed right away that it wasn't just the fact that he was getting taller; Karl needed to put on muscle weight. Karl was so thin that his sternum extended out from his chest. Immediately I devised a nutritional and fitness plan to help Karl put on muscular weight. I explained to him the importance of eating properly, timely and scientifically in order for him to put on extra weight. Then I explained to him what we would do in the fitness center to help him strengthen his body, build his confidence and put on muscle weight. I have trained individuals in the past that were willing to succeed; however, I have never trained a young man with such tenacity to succeed. Karl exercised three times a week with me for over a year. He ate well all the time and took added nutritional supplements to help him succeed. Karl pushed himself inside the fitness center and outside the fitness center by doing extra exercises to help increase his strength and size. Karl's weight when he first started was about 120 pounds. After a little over a year Karl has gained over 60 pounds and most of this is muscle. His strength has tripled compared to when he first started working out. Amazingly, Karl exhibited total passion and strength on his quest to generate optimal physical shape.

It is truly a pleasure to continue to work with Karl, to encourage him and, at times, to learn from him. His fitness success is just a small example of his determination to succeed. I am truly honored and grateful to have the opportunity to work with such a wonderful young man like Karl Winek.

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A Zest to Be Her Physical Best

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am very honored to have the opportunity to write about so many wonderful people and their spectacular physical achievements. In this article, I will be writing about a very special client that I trained for seven years and who is still a member of the fitness facility after nine years. Trudy Faires is truly a wonderful person and an ongoing success story.

I remember the first time Trudy entered the fitness facility, she really did not want to be here. Trudy's friend brought her to see me and was hoping

that I could help Trudy make fitness a part of her life. I recall Trudy being a bit reluctant. Trudy told me later that she was a little bit upset that her friend did not prepare her better for her first fitness experience. Anyway, that first consultation with Trudy became more relaxing for her after I explained the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and a well-defined fitness regimen. During the consultation, I learned that Trudy had previously experienced muscle fatigue in her legs to the extent where she had to sit down while

she was in line waiting to check out her groceries. I realized that as a fitness trainer, I needed to convince Trudy to join my lifestyle personal training program. Trudy agreed and started at the beginning of the next week.

Surprisingly, within the first few months, she did very well and excelled beyond expectation. I have had many training experiences with many different people women and men; however, I have never experienced someone develop such a zest to exercise. Within those seven years of personal training, Trudy excelled in every area of the fitness regimen that I devised for her. I recall all the different times of giving Trudy new and advanced exercises and she would always exhibit excitement, a smile and could not wait to give them a try. During my training experience with Trudy those seven years, she never

missed a single personal training session except for when she was on vacation.

Trudy's positive attitude and personal persistence has propelled her to a new level in life. As a personal fitness trainer, I am truly happy to see her succeed as well as she has. About three years ago, Trudy retired and took an interest in becoming a personal trainer. Trudy pursued a personal training certification and now, not only has she achieved an even higher level of fitness; she also has the ability, if she chooses, to help others succeed in the same manner that she has.

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A Dynamic Duo Makes Fitness a Couples Event

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

Max and Ardith Wessler started their fitness experience at Fitness Counseling Inc. in 1998. During that time, they were under the tutelage of Peoria's founding father of personal training, Jerry Thomas. In 2001 at a special ceremony, Jerry Thomas, due to his illness, handed me the ball. He told me to take this business and run with it and most importantly, he said, please take care of my people. With pride and honor, my emotions were high with inspiration and gratefulness; however, I could hardly bear seeing a once proud owner of Fitness Counseling Inc. breakdown and cry

as he walked away from a fitness center where he had once taught so many people to believe in themselves.

Once everything was settled, the business was relocated. I recall the very first day Fitness Counseling Inc. reopened. It was cold and snow was falling that early winter morning. All seemed quiet until a very special couple entered the fitness center. It was Max and Ardith Wessler. Immediately they greeted me with a warm, wonderful smile. With open arms, they accepted me as their new fitness trainer. We talked about their fitness experience and their fitness needs along

with any special conditions that needed to be addressed. After the assessment, I took them through a fitness routine that would meet their needs. During the exercise routine, I corrected some form and helped establish posture while performing different movements. But, all in all, they were well underway to continuing a healthy lifestyle. That personal training session was a very special moment for me because Max and Ardith were my very first training session in my new fitness facility.

For the next 10 years, Max and Ardith would frequent the fitness facility and train with me three times per week. The only time they would ever miss a fitness session was when they were away in Wisconsin at their cabin. However, when they did return from their Wisconsin cabin, they would share with me wonderful stories during their fitness sessions. One of my favorite stories was about the little elusive mink that would only share a glimpse of himself. I told Max and Ardith the next time that they visit the cabin, the little mink would show himself in full view. Many months later when they were revisiting the cabin, I received the most amazing phone message stating that the little mink ran across the beach and back towards the house and back towards the beach in full

view of Max and Ardith. It was an enjoyable moment to hear the happiness and excitement in Max's voice on the message. That was about seven years ago and to this day, they have never seen the mink again.

Many wonderful moments have occurred during our fitness sessions, but nothing more important than the level of health and fitness Max and Ardith Wessler have achieved together. I am extremely proud to be part of their fitness plan and seeing them generate such a healthy lifestyle. Now in their 80s, Max and Ardith continue to exercise in my fitness facility doing the exercise movements that I have showed them for so many years. I also would like to express how grateful I am to have them as such an important part of my fitness family. Their warmth, personal drive, kindness towards others, and most importantly, their positive outlook on life should be an inspiring lesson towards all who want to live life to the fullest.

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Life May Challenge You

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

Life may challenge you, but it is up to you to take the challenge and find away to overcome.

As a personal trainer, I am delighted to write this article on an amazing athlete and a client that I respect and admire wholeheartedly. About two years ago, Darren Fry, a massage therapist at Fitness Counseling Inc. and who also owns and operates Body Mechanics, referred Angie Breton to me. Darren noticed that Angie had some muscular imbalances that should be corrected in order for Angie to perform better during her 26-mile marathons. Upon meeting Angie and evaluating her, I did notice

some areas of concern. The main concerns that I noticed she needed to develop as a runner was a better system for flexibility, hip stabilization, core and upper body strength.

From the get-go, Angie exhibited a positive mindset, a strong drive, and a powerful work ethic. Over the next two years, Angie developed and strengthened her body and overcame obstacles that keep her from reaching her optimal performance. Amazingly, Angie's strength development and conditioning has progressed rapidly. She exhibits good body balance, a well-developed core, and we are continuing to work on flexibility. Angie's drive and personal persis-

tence is one-of-a-kind. Angie's work ethic and positive outlook is that of a professional athlete and champion. One may say, wow; good for her, she's doing it. I see it differently. I see a woman in her late 50s who overcame many life-changing obstacles. She is an example of what can be done when life tries to defeat us and we just won't allow it.

Angie's fitness experience was nonexistent seven years ago. For over 36 years, Angie smoked and for five of those years Angie did the best she could with helping her husband every day with dialysis. Sadly, he did not survive complications after a transplant, leaving Angie to manage her five children on her own. A short time later, Angie helped nurse her brother until his untimely passing also. After so many life-changing events, Angie mustered the strength to find a way to go forward. She started running on a regular basis and realized that smoking was inhibiting her development. Within a short time, she stopped smoking entirely. Angie

developed a love for running and also other forms of exercise. Angie has competed in many marathons and has placed at the top of her age bracket. Angie continues to run marathons, train with me, and also exercises on her own. Angie's challenges seemed to never end. At this point in time, she is helping raise her seven grandchildren in her house.

Angie is truly an amazing person and it is truly a wonderful experience for me to be able to assist her in her training. In the two years I have been training Angie whenever I say it's good to see you, how are you; she responds—*I am strong and powerful*. Then I ask, what are you; again she responds—*I am a machine now, let's get going*. The nicest thing about it, she always says it with a smile.

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Strength In More Ways Than One

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am delighted to write about Dr. Ron Winick. For the last nine years, I have trained and instructed Dr. Ron on his quest to become his physical best. With sheer determination, willpower, and discipline, Dr. Ron Winick has developed an ongoing fitness regimen that has reshaped his lifestyle. Every Tuesday and Saturday, Dr. Ron always enters the gym with a smile. I ask him if he is ready to get going and he replies, without hesitation: Yes, indeed. After stretching and using the stationary bike as a warm-up, Dr. Ron is carefully guided through a strength and conditioning program designed specifically for him. Amazingly, Dr. Ron has developed a higher level of tolerance and an ability to partake in an advanced level exercise regimen. Getting fit and staying fit is an important part of Dr. Ron's lifestyle. For the past nine years, Dr. Ron has taken his health seriously and persevered by following a well-managed nutritional program and has continued to make fitness and strength training an important part of his life.

Dr. Ron has demonstrated his strength in the fitness center in more ways than one. Not only has he achieved a higher level of fitness, he exhibits strength in many other

ways. One such show of strength is being a caring father and sharing his fitness experience with his son, Karl. For many years, Dr. Ron has encouraged Karl to undertake a healthier lifestyle. Dr. Ron's encouragement has helped Karl to also achieve a higher level of physical fitness. Dr. Ron also shows his true strength, character, and gentleness with his youngest daughter, Gretel, who is a special needs child. Never once have I ever heard him complain about his caretaking; in fact, he has always shared the wonderful moments he has experienced with her.

Dr. Ron Winick is one the most interesting and intelligent man that I have had the privilege to train. Dr. Ron has a love for well-written autobiographies of famous people. Listening to Dr. Ron, I have learned about men like Andrew Carnegie, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett.

I have truly enjoyed the many moments that I have shared with Dr. Ron. Like I stated before, he exhibits strength in many more ways than one.

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Successful Clients Become Ever Lasting Friends

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

This article is a tribute to two very special clients that I have had the privilege to work with and train for the past five years.

I was first introduced to Nancy Braun when I had my previous fitness center located on Candletree Drive in Peoria. Nancy was in need of a fitness program due to her inability to perform exercise because of a past physical condition. Nancy explained to me her needs and what she desired to accomplish with the training regimen.

For the first few months, Nancy performed a lot of the basic movements a trainer would incorporate to help a client achieve better strength and better mobility in order for the client to partake in more advanced movements. Once Nancy achieved better functional movement, we were able to incorporate some of the advanced movements necessary for her to acquire more stability and strength. A slight lapse occurred while I was moving Fitness Counseling Inc. to a bigger and better facility. Once everything was re-established, Nancy and I were back to training again. Once more,

Nancy exhibited a determination to become stronger and better. Nancy has an ability to adapt very quickly to an exercise program so, in order to keep her on track and focused, we constantly had to diversify the fitness regimen. Doing so even challenged me to be more creative and to learn different approaches to helping a client to keep interest. For that lesson I am grateful because knowledge is King.

This past year Nancy has really done very well. Due to team effort, Nancy has lost most of the weight that she desired to lose not only due to fitness, but also found out exactly what type of food allergies inhibited her from losing the necessary weight she desired. Persistence, determination, regimen, and action have contributed to Nancy acquiring the weight loss and strength she desired.

In the past, Nancy has definitely undergone conditions that limited her physical action. However, now she is strong, positive, and powerful and has the capability to overcome all odds. She is determined to succeed, has the personal ability to succeed, and

I know she will succeed. In many ways, I am grateful to have worked with Nancy.

When Nancy introduced me to her husband, Eric, she gave me a best friend. I started training Eric four years ago. After about one year, not only did I train Eric, I also trained with him. Eric and I would meet at different times and train together as a team. Our workouts together were some of the best workouts that we have had. Just recently we added a third partner, Lonnie Marvel, which completed the picture.

As a trainer it is wonderful to encourage people to succeed and see them succeed. It is also wonderful as a trainer to receive encouragement from exercise partners. Without a doubt, some of my most memorable workouts have been exercising with Eric. Even the moments when Eric became stronger than me at certain exercise movements. I was reminded of that recently that it is okay for my clients to become stronger than me, be-

cause it meant I was doing my job. However it feels different when you train side-by-side.

Eric and Nancy are more than just wonderful people to me—I consider them friends. It has been a pleasure training them and training with them, but all in all, it has been more of a pleasure being their friend. I know Eric and Nancy will succeed at their fitness goals and continue to succeed with or without me. Now, when I state with or without me, I state that with a bit of happiness and also a bit of sadness because after five years of being a part of the fitness counseling family, they will be leaving August 2012 to be stationed in England. Eric and Nancy are successful clients and more importantly they are everlasting friends.

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A Special Client No Matter the Distance

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

It is an absolute pleasure to write about Bill Mannlein. Bill is a very special client, a wonderful person, and someone who stands true to the real meaning of integrity. Bill started his fitness experience with me in June of 1995. He came to me in search of an exercise regimen that would help strengthen him and allow him to function better with his current activities. Together, we put together an exercise program that fulfilled his needs. At the time, Bill maintained a very active lifestyle. He was the former CEO of Fleming and Potter. He enjoyed playing tennis and golf

and was very active designing and creating some of the most wonderful furniture. There have been many occasions where Bill has shown me many wonderful woodworking techniques in his woodworking shop. Bill has been a personal training client of mine for over 12 years. I have had the most wonderful experiences training and working with Bill and developing a fitness regimen that allows him to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In many ways, I am also extremely grateful to have Bill be a part of Fitness Counseling Inc.

As wonderful as it is to see a client succeed, it is just as

wonderful to have a client be a part of your own personal success. Many years ago, I was working for the former owner of Fitness Counseling Inc., Jerry Thomas, who was a wonderful trainer, and in the later years, became a good friend of mine. However, there came a time when it was in my best interest to depart from Fitness Counseling Inc. I needed a solution to that current complication. Unexpectedly, Bill Mannlein had a wonderful solution. He suggested I contact the owners of River City Athletic Club. He set up an interview with Lee O'Connell; his son, Dan; and his daughter, Kerry. I was hired as the Director of Youth Strength and Conditioning. I am grateful to Bill because I have had many wonderful experiences working for such remarkable people. During that period at River City, I continued to train and help Bill maintain his strength program. After seven years, I reunited with Jerry Thomas in a very wonderful way. Jerry convinced me to take over Fitness Counseling Inc. I did and Bill followed me to my location on Candletree drive. Then after a few more years, I decided to relocate my business to a more spacious building, and with the help of two more of my wonderful clients, Tom and Barbara Leiter, I was able to undergo another wonderful adventure.

Once again, Bill joined me and my other clients and continued to be a wonderful part of the Fitness Counseling fitness family.

Even though Bill and his wife, Dinnah, have since left Peoria and moved to Florida, he continues to be a wonderful part of Fitness Counseling Inc. Even from many miles away, Bill continues his fitness regimen. Last week, I received an email from Bill saying that he and his wife were visiting Peoria for one month and would like to re-join Fitness Counseling for their exercise needs. I was more than happy to reunite with Bill and have him once more be a part of Fitness Counseling Inc.

I am very grateful to have the opportunity to be able to share my experiences with such wonderful people through these articles. This article specifically is extremely special in many ways. It is written to honor Bill's continuing success on his fitness lifestyle journey and to let him know not only how honored I am to have him in my life, but to show how much I appreciate being a part of his life also.

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Staying Fit is a Lifelong Event

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

For the past 10 years, I have experienced many wonderful moments training Gary and Lindsay Grimmer. My first encounter with Gary was when I met him at a business meeting that was set up by the former owner of Fitness Counseling. During the meeting, Gary, a business owner of data management systems, spoke many words of wisdom but he did not want to take part in the gym business. However, after the meeting, Gary and I spoke and he expressed his interest in continuing an exercise regimen. I explained to Gary what I planned for Fitness Counsel-

ing and how I could help him maintain his fitness needs. Once Fitness Counseling was reestablished under my direction, Gary contacted me to continue his fitness regimen. Together we created a fitness system that would help him achieve his goals. It has been very easy to train Gary; he has learned to pay attention to his body's needs. Gary realizes his body needs continual special attention in order for him to remain as strong as he is and continue to be in the great shape that he is. It is nice to see him become and remain so successful with his fitness regimen. Gary possesses

strength and a great physique; however, Gary's attention and dedication to family is amazing. Gary's concern for the health needs of his wife, Lindsay, has always been extremely important. Within a few months of Gary joining Fitness Counseling, he introduced me to Lindsay and within a few days, we put together a fitness program for her. Lindsay, being a teacher, understands the importance of listening to her instructor. She questioned me and challenged me when she felt needed to do so, but would always follow through with her routine. Lindsay continues to follow through with her exercise regimen consistently through the years. Lindsay has maintained her strength well beyond the norm and at the same time looks phenomenal.

During the 10 years of training, Gary and Lindsay have seldom missed a workout except for vacation or emergencies. Gary and Lindsay's dedication to a successful lifestyle has enabled them to continue to enjoy life in a wonderful way. I asked them both a simple question. I asked Lindsay why she exercises and takes care of herself. Lindsay responded, "I exercise so I can keep ahead of my age. Also, I want to enjoy playing golf with my husband and having the energy to keep up with my grandchildren." Lindsay states that it takes determination, willpower,

and discipline to take charge of your life. She also states that if you want good results, you cannot go halfway—you must eat well and exercise regularly in order to obtain your goal. I asked Gary the same question and he simply stated that it is something you have to do if you want to be in shape. You need to make a continuous lifestyle change with regular exercise and proper nutrition.

Gary and Lindsay are great examples of continually following through with a healthy lifestyle change. In many ways I am grateful to be able to be a part of their fitness needs. I have truly enjoyed their company at Fitness Counseling. It is very important to me to see them succeed the way they have. Gary and Lindsay have become a very important part of the Fitness Counseling family. I hope I am able provide them with their fitness needs for many years to come. Gary and Lindsay are true examples of what it takes to succeed.

Robert J. Schwander is the owner and a certified personal trainer at Fitness Counseling, Inc. located at 1020 W. Detweiller Dr., Peoria. Phone: 309-692-6533



Fitness Enables a Wonderful Person to Keep Giving

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am very pleased to write about a very special person and a long-term member of Fitness Counseling Inc. Alan Stahl has been a member of Fitness Counseling Inc. for 11 years. During the past 11 years, Alan has achieved a wonderful degree of fitness. Many years ago while working a desk job at Caterpillar Inc. as an electrical engineer, Alan realized it was time to develop a form of cardiovascular conditioning. Alan decided to dedicate time in developing his fitness. He was introduced to Fitness Counseling Inc. through a current member. Alan joined and started his cardiovascular conditioning. Alan found out that while developing his cardiovascular conditioning, he was also building strength and muscle tone while incorporating a structured weightlifting regimen. Alan is a very intelligent man possessing a PhD in electrical engineering; however, Alan realizes the importance of proper guidance. On many occasions, I've had the wonderful opportunity to help guide Alan on proper form and exercise selection. Alan's continuing success will help him maintain a healthy lifestyle and enable him to enjoy his life for many years to come.

Alan states that continuing a well-developed fitness regimen has helped him feel and look better. Alan also states that he is very grateful to be a part of the fitness counseling family. Exercise has enabled Alan to continue doing some of the things that he enjoys. Every year, Alan and members of his church partake in what Alan calls construction missions. These missions would include heavy lifting, renovations of households, and the development of other

important projects that would help sustain a particular community. Alan also engages in many activities that challenge his physical ability. At 69, Alan found out how important it is to be in great physical condition. While working on a church project, he was in charge of a grass tiller; he realized after a while how many muscles and what kind of conditioning it takes to operate it. Alan said it took some work; however, he conquered the job.

I would like to state how wonderful it is to have Alan as part of the Fitness Counseling family. Alan will always meet you with a warm and wonderful smile. The special thing about Alan is that he is always extremely courteous and kind. Alan always makes me, the owner, and all others feel welcome in our facility. I am grateful for my experience of having Alan as a member of Fitness Counseling Inc. for the past 11 years. Alan states an important fact, and this fact I can attest to, is the reason why he has achieved great success within his quest for being fit. It is not just entering the gym and working out three times a week that will help you obtain physical fitness. There is more to it than that, you must also develop a healthy lifestyle. Exercise alone will not help you achieve maximum results; you must incorporate proper nutrition and a balanced lifestyle. Therefore, the most important consideration is to put together a fitness and nutritional program in order to have the total package.

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Strength In More Ways Than One

By Robert J. Schwander, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

Once again, I am honored to write about two very special members of Fitness Counseling Inc. Tom and Ruth Ruppert have been a part of Fitness Counseling Inc. for about seven years. They were introduced to us through Max and Ardith Wessler. Tom and Ruth came to me in need of a fitness regimen. Tom has always been pretty active his whole life, and, in fact, was once recruited to play pro basketball. However, he decided to stay in Peoria and help educate children as the Athletic Director at Concordia Lutheran School. Tom was also an excellent college baseball

player and played first base all four years of college. Ruth also was very active in college sports and activities. However, as time passed, responsibilities have added up and activities seemed to subside. With this realization, Tom and Ruth set up a consultation at Fitness Counseling Inc. Together we came up with a basic plan to help them generate a healthier lifestyle. Tom and Ruth both engaged in personal training that consisted of core strength movements and cardiovascular development. Their development was steady and is still ongoing to this present day. I am very glad to see

how well they developed a persistent approach to a healthier lifestyle. For many years, Tom and Ruth personal trained two or three times per week.

Tom and Ruth are very special to me. Not so long ago they experienced perhaps one of the biggest challenges in their life at the same time I was going undergoing my own challenge of taking care of my father who came to live with me from Arizona although he was extremely ill. Tom and Ruth's daughter was also extremely ill. However, she lived out of state. For many months out of the year, Ruth would fly out of state to help take care of her daughter. Tom, on many occasions also visited to help his daughter but still had to maintain a full-time job. On many occasions during those troubled times, we would get together and give each other support. I myself am extremely grateful to have such wonderful clients. Together, we gently learned to regroup and carry-on after the loss of a loved one.

At the present moment, I am glad to say that Tom and Ruth are both back on track exercising about two or three times a week. I am extremely grateful to have them as a part of the Fitness Counseling family, although I no longer personal trained them. They are continuing to follow the routines we had created together. I am still fortunate to be able to instruct them with new exercises to help further the development

and challenge them physically. I asked Tom what benefits he received from exercise and he stated that exercise has helped him with flexibility strength, overall well being, and it helps him sleep better. Tom also states a healthy body promotes a lifestyle glorifying God and helps us use our talents for his good. Ruth states that exercise has helped her feel better and helped her with her posture.

I was to be invited to a very special event by one of my clients, Bill King, owner of KB Elliot Financial Advisors. The event hosted a guest speaker who was a former Cub catcher, Jody Davis. I had the wonderful opportunity to invite Tom to see Jody Davis speak. Together we had a wonderful experience receiving autographed photos and baseballs. The event was amazing. However, during questions and answers, Jody Davis was asked: "How do you prepare yourself mentally to play professional baseball?" Amazingly, he responded, "You must learn to fix yourself." In other words, you must be able to adjust and fix yourself on-the-fly. He also stated that you can implement this in any aspect of life. It was an amazing night and I am so happy that I chose to bring Tom as my guest.

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Exercise Equals Healthy Fun

By Marianne H.

Editor's Note: As a special thank you to Robert, one of his clients submitted the following article which we are publishing in lieu of Robert's monthly column.

"It isn't only what you achieve that matters; it is what other people achieve through you." This is one of the many motivational sayings posted in the gym by certified personal trainer Robert Schwander, owner of Fitness Counseling, Inc. Robert, a regular contributor to this publication, works supportively with his clients to achieve their fitness goals.

In less than a year, Robert has made a significant impact in our lives. My husband and I are grateful for the individualized workout routines Robert creates for us that energize and encourage us to get healthy as we progress through the fifty plus generation. Robert is a dedicated training professional who wants to see all his clients succeed.

My husband is an avid bicyclist who wanted to ramp up training for the summer riding season. He researched trainers in the area and came across Robert's facility. They met and quickly developed a great rapport. Robert developed a training routine that evolves with him to create new fitness challenges. I was a more reluctant participant. As a 50 plus obese woman, the thought of talking to a personal trainer was intimidating. It isn't easy to talk to a stranger about your shortcomings and admit you love sweets and sitting around more than nutrition and exercise. My husband encouraged me to at least meet Robert to talk about developing a plan to exercise regularly and safely.

Robert helped me achieve something I never thought pos-

sible, which is having the interest and enthusiasm to want to work out on a regular basis. He is patient and enthusiastic while teaching the fundamentals of safe workouts.

On a few occasions, I've actually worked out twice a day just because I have exercise goals and feel so much better afterwards. Robert is knowledgeable, nurturing, and quick with praise. He has created an inviting and relaxing atmosphere in his gym so you feel comfortable and confident working with him or independently on exercises or cardio.

This past summer I was able to ride with my husband and friends for the first time. I am now actively training to increase my strength and stamina while shedding pounds to participate this summer in a week long cycling event that's over 450 miles. This is something that would not be possible without Robert's guidance and continued support from my husband and his fellow cyclists.

Thank you, Robert, for helping us achieve much more in terms of health and fitness than we would have ever achieved on our own. We want you to know we respect and appreciate you. We wish you and your readership continued good health and fitness success.

For more information about training opportunities contact Robert at Fitness Counseling, Inc. 1020 W. Detweiller Dr., Peoria. Phone: 309-692-6533.



Is it a New Beginning or Is it a Continuum?

By Robert Schwander.

Amazing—we are already two months into the new year. The year 2012 had brought us many experiences that were individually unique. In many regards, some of us have been challenged more than others, with conditions that may or may not have been in their control. All in all, we must focus on the reason to maintain or develop a healthier lifestyle according to our specific needs.

Drive and desire, as I stated last year, are key components to our success whether it may be in business, relationships, or fitness. The need to have a balanced life is normal. When one has the desire and the drive to seek and develop or fine-tune their life, they are saying “I consider myself important.” A lot of us feel or believe we are important and have found the right lifestyle solution to fit our needs. Feeling important and being action-oriented enables us to seek better ways to create a healthier lifestyle. Still, there are many who, even though they feel they are important, lack the proper desire and drive that is needed to achieve their fitness goals.

What is so special about desire? Desire is the driving force, the key to someone’s wants or needs. Desire will propel you to achieve. However, desire can be viewed like a furnace: if the heat is low, a room will be cool; if the heat is high, a room will be hot. A prime example of a strong desire is when one finds himself at a crossroad in life or at a moment such as a new year. Usually a crossroad or a challenge, such as the need to

create a healthier lifestyle, compels a person to have a strong desire and enables him, in most cases, to complete the task.

A good example of a desire to succeed is a New Year’s resolution; unfortunately, the New Year’s resolution is only good until the tiniest setback puts it on the sideline. A simple setback can turn the fire of desire off. However, if you mix *drive* with your desire, you will be able to blast through life’s little challenges. The two simple keys for a sound lifestyle regimen is to visualize and see yourself already successful at your fitness goals and the other is to learn to adjust yourself to the level of your fitness ability every day.

It is important that you realize that you—and only you—are in control of the level of fitness you want to acquire. You have the choice to choose at every moment whether or not you truly want to succeed. We can come up with many reasons why it would be hard to succeed; however, none of those reasons have any power over you if your desire to succeed and your drive is strong enough to carry you through to complete the task. With every client that I encounter, I view them as already being successful and hope to one day write an article about them. It is up to clients to see and feel for themselves what I see in them, and that is—that they will be successful.

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Life's Little Lessons

By Robert Schwander

Life never ceases to amaze me, and the wonderful experiences that I have encountered through my many wonderful clients and very special friends continues to help me believe that anything is possible.

I had scheduled a consultation with a potentially new client and a few days later, I met with this person. I can recall the meeting as though it were yesterday. I met with this potential client and we discussed her interest in getting in shape. She told me that she had scheduled a bike trip in Europe and it was her first time doing such a thing. She wanted to develop her cardiovascular conditioning and increase her strength. She told me she was concerned that the cycling would be a challenge for her. In my mind, I completely agreed with her. She was extremely underweight and when I gave her a simple fitness evaluation, I realized that she was completely under-conditioned. In my mind, I felt that she had a long journey ahead of her. I explained to her that it was going to take a lot of effort on her part. I told her the importance

of developing a fitness regimen is not only for temporary goals, but is important to make it a life-long event. She explained that she would give it a try after she met the goal to get in shape for her cycling trip in Europe. Sometimes it is I who learn a life's little lesson. For the moment she told me her goal was to be able to cycle, my mind thought that she was motivated enough to complete her cycling trip. However, I then foolishly thought that she did not have the emotional means to succeed making fitness a lifelong event.

Her fitness regimen to get in shape for her Europe cycling trip began with simple steps with which to develop her cardiovascular and strength. Her fitness regimen began at the simplest level. Furthermore, I knew there was a great need for her to develop an adequate nutritional solution to help her gain some much-needed muscle. I explained to her that it was an essential part of her fitness development that she follow some simple nutritional advice. We discussed the need for her to consume a better balanced

nutritional system. Amazingly, she followed the advice and developed rather quickly. Many months past and she was on her way to being in the best shape of her life. The time came for her Europe cycling trip and she was on her way to attempt the challenge. With fireworks and flying colors, she conquered it and had the time of her life. However, I truly did not believe that I would be training her again due to the fact that she had reached her goal. Then once again, I was put in my place when she scheduled more training appointments upon returning.

Almost 18 years later, I am still training Dr. Sally Joe Winek. She continues to excel in fitness and health. Amazingly, not only does she exercise regularly, she also eats well. She has found solutions such as using a Vita mix to help her meet her nutritional needs. Dr. Winek is in bet-

ter shape now than she's ever been. Not only does she utilize my services, she also partakes in classes to help improve her stamina, flexibility, and coordination. I am extremely proud to write about such a wonderful person and a good friend. Every once in a while, with a smile, Dr. Sally Joe Winek reminds me of how I thought that she was not going to make fitness a part of her life after her cycling trip. With a smile, I always let her know that I am extremely proud of her success and admit that every once in a while, I receive a life's little lesson myself enabling me to realize that anything, and I mean anything, is possible.

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Having Insight on Your Fitness Goal Will Bring You Success

By Robert J. Schwander

I am very pleased to be able to write about a very special client and member of Fitness Counseling Inc. Dr. Tom Wyman of Illinois Eye Center started here in 1994 while it was under the ownership of Jerry Thomas. A former colleague of Illinois Eye Center introduced Dr. Tom Wyman to Fitness Counseling Inc. At the time, Tom was an avid runner and realized that running alone was not meeting his fitness needs. Tom realized he needed to strengthen his core due to the fact that he was developing back issues from running. Tom also realized while training at Fitness Counseling Inc. that it was essential not only to strengthen his core, but it was also important to develop an overall fitness regimen to help stabilize his entire body. Within a short period of time, Tom's conditioning regimen helped him sustain his enjoyment of running without back pain.

In 1995, I joined Fitness Counseling Inc. as a personal trainer and during that time I had the wonderful opportunity to help train Tom. Some years later, I had the fortunate opportunity to become owner and operator of Fitness Counseling Inc. This has given me the wonderful opportunity to continue training Tom, whom I consider to be a great friend.

Tom is our longest standing member. Tom realizes that exercise is a lifelong event and his exercise regimen is constantly adjusting to fit the needs of his body. Tom maintains his exercise regimen by lifting weights and doing cardio three times per week. Exercise helps him sustain energy, correct his posture, and maintain his mental focus. In turn, exercise enables him to continue to enjoy his work at Illinois Eye Center and also enables him to continue to enjoy traveling, fly fishing, and hiking with his wife, Jean.

I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of Tom's life. Tom's pleasing personality and wonderful smile makes Fitness Counseling a wonderful place to be. On many occasions, we have enjoyed wonderful conversations. I am also grateful to have had the many wonderful opportunities of dining out with Tom and his wife, Jean. I congratulate Tom for his many years of success. I hope to see him here for many years to come.

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If a Physical Complication Exists, Find a Way to Work Around It

By Robert J. Schwander

It is wonderful to have the opportunity to write about so many special clients. This month I'm writing about a special client that I have been able to work with for over eight years. Her friend, who was also a client of mine, introduced Alice Spitzer to me. Immediately following our introduction, I set up a consultation with Alice. During our consultation, Alice explained to me her concern due to ongoing conditions. About seven years prior to our consultation, Alice experienced a severe condition with her neck. Alice underwent extensive therapy to help her cope with her neck condition. The therapy minimized the pain; however, without surgery the condition would remain. Alice realized she needed another approach to keep her neck pain at bay. Her second approach to help her cope with her neck pain was to utilize the system of fluent movement called Feldenkrais. Feldenkrais is used to improve habitual and repetitive movement patterns rather than to treat specific injuries or illnesses. However, because habitual and repetitive movement patterns can contribute toward and, in some cases, cause injury, pain, and physical dysfunction, the method is often regarded as falling within the field of integrative medicine or complementary medicine. I believe it was a fine choice Alice made implementing the therapeutic procedure. However, Feldenkrais alone would not allow Alice to continue living a healthy lifestyle. Alice still had to deal with periodic back pain, poor posture, and a strength imbalance on one side of her body.

Upon completing the consultation and physical evaluation, we decided it would be beneficial for her physical needs to train at least three times per week. During our sessions,

I showed Alice many specific exercises to help her with the various conditions she had. I also explained to her in detail what the specific exercises were developing and how to manage the mind-body connection while she was exercised. The mind-body connection allowed Alice to disengage from tension and also taught her how to mentally connect with the area she was exercising at the moment. After about six months of continual training I noticed a large improvement with her conditioning. Alice's strength improved and she had developed better strength on both sides of her body.

Alice continued to train with me for about seven years and her overall strength, muscle tone and fitness level improved. Her posture has significantly improved and her body strength was balanced.

Alice continues to exercise at Fitness Counseling Inc. on her own. I am proud to say that she has developed a fitness lifestyle commitment that will allow her to enjoy the many things she loves to do. Some of those things include traveling with her husband, Kyle Spitzer, and serving the community by volunteering many hours helping those in need. Her commitment to the community in my eyes is a wonderful gift she provides. Her determination and dedication has helped numerous people handle their health conditions.

Alice is now in her 70s and has found a way to help her body function by working around physical obstacles that in the past has limited her lifestyle.

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She Met the Challenge

By Robert J. Schwander

I would like to introduce you to a client that I have had the wonderful opportunity to be part of her new lifestyle change. Debbie Seyller was introduced to me by Denise Miller, a member of Fitness Counseling Inc. After two years of carrying around my business card, Debbie decided to utilize my services when she and nine others were chosen to partake in a weight loss challenge. When Debbie and I met to evaluate her fitness condition, we also scheduled one-on-one sessions for the duration of the contest. The contest, consisting of both men and women, would be for 15 weeks, from January 7 to April 29.

Debbie told me she was very serious about being a part of the contest. She had always planned to make a change in her life when she turned 49. She said life was going to be about “me.” Although she was not 49 yet, she decided the time was now for her to start her journey and to make a healthier lifestyle change. Debbie also stated that in order for her to overcome her previous lifestyle that held her captive with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and borderline diabetes, she had make a change for the better.

Amazingly, as I worked with Debbie on her fitness challenges, she took personal charge and created a new mindset. When I told her how wonderful it was to see her so positive, she replied that her new positive outlook was like a new season. Debbie’s new positive mental attitude helped her overcome the physical challenges. Debbie not only overcame those challenges, she has made fitness an important part of her new beginning.

Although Debbie was excited about her new beginning, it was

my job to make sure her physical activity did not exceed her ability. That she had an understanding of what type of fitness regimen would be incorporated for someone who previously did not have a structured fitness regimen. On January 7, Debbie and I met for her first personal training session. The session consisted of three exercises: airdyne bike for 5 minutes, recumbent bike for 5 minutes, and a Star Trac elliptical for 5 minutes. She would follow that regimen for approximately one week. Thereafter, we continued to incorporate different exercises that strengthened and stabilized her body. By week 15, Debbie had reached a level of fitness that enabled her to challenge herself effectively. I am extremely proud and grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Debbie. Amazingly, within 15 weeks, Debbie lost 52 lbs and 34-1/2 inches. Her health has dramatically changed for the better and she told me she no longer needs some of her medications.

Debbie told me she also contributes her success to Philippians 4.13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me”, which kept popping up in her mind. She states she was also very grateful for her friends’ positive Facebook posts and the encouragement from her family. “It was wonderful,” she says, “and it kept me focused, knowing anything was possible.”

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You Cannot See Inspiration You Can Only Experience it

By Robert J. Schwander,
Owner Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I've had the wonderful opportunity to write numerous articles on many fabulous and amazing people. This month's article is about an amazing man who has the courage to strive forward against surmountable odds. Don Ullman first entered Fitness Counseling Inc. about one year ago. Don was accompanied by a very warm-hearted personal trainer of Fitness Counseling Inc., Brian Barlow. Brian's gentleness, patience and expertise has helped Don achieve a wonderful level of fitness.

Don Ullman has always lived an active life. For many years he worked for the Federal Warehouse Company. Don also enjoyed outdoor activities such as traveling and fishing. In fact, Don was an avid fisherman. Don's fishing adventures included trips to Brazil to fish the magnificent peacock bass. Don also enjoyed Florida fishing where he angled for redfish. Alaska was one of Don's favorite destinations for salmon and halibut. He also enjoyed Canada where he landed many walleye and northern pike. Don also enjoyed restoring vintage cars. One of his favorite restorations is a 1936 Airflow made by Chrysler. During our interview, Don stated there were only 50 of these cars in the world.

A day after his 50th birthday, Don found himself in a life threatening situation. Don had developed a form of tumor in the facial region. The radiation was strong enough to subdue the tumor; however, it took his vision in one eye. Even though Don experienced a life altering situation he managed to strive forward and enjoy life. Many years later Don experienced a second tumor, the doctor explained to him that he had a 36% chance of losing sight

in his other eye. Don explained he had a choice to watch himself die or possibly not watch himself live. Don decided to undergo extensive daily radiation and chemotherapy. The therapy appeared to put the tumor at bay. However, after a year of powerful radiation it managed to reach the optic nerve and take the remainder of his sight. Don said his next challenge was to live life without seeing.

Don has experienced adversity after adversity; however, he refuses to allow anything to hold him down. Amazingly, Don exercises with Brian Barlow during the summer months and in Florida during the winter months with another trainer. Don expressed the importance of exercise at 74. Don says it has improved his balance, he feels stronger, his energy level is higher, it has improved his self-esteem, and he feels so much better overall.

I asked Don what he would advise anyone making excuses not to eat well and exercise regularly. Don says to think about what can you accomplish by not being that way. Don also says there are people who are worse than you and I. You must pull yourself up and find a way to do it.

Don is truly an amazing man. He has taught us to be inspired through his experience. I am grateful to be able to write about such a wonderful man. Thank you, Don, for entering our fitness facility.

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A Strong Mindset to Succeed

By Robert J. Schwander,
Owner Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am pleased to be able to write this month's article on a client of mine who exhibits strength and intellect in many ways. Michele Blubaugh first started training with me at Fitness Counseling Inc. in October 2012. Michele's reasoning for starting a fitness regimen is very basic. She wanted to improve her strength, body, and flexibility.

Michele, at the time 58, realized the importance of a well defined fitness regimen that would fit her needs. Michele's realization for a personalized fitness regimen was logical. During our consultation she said she wanted to take care of her physical well-being. When I asked her why it was so important for her to do so, she said she had seen people her age and beyond who have not made a logical choice to start a fitness regimen. The majority of them had poor posture, poor eating habits, lack of mobility, flexibility, and body tone. Michele decided that was not going to be a way of life for her. She also realized it was going to be a challenge for her to once again develop an active and healthy lifestyle.

In her youth, Michele spent many years performing gymnastics. She was also a dancer and cheerleader. Michele understood the importance of structured activity in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle; however, working a full-time job and attending college forced her to set exercising aside. Due to advances at Caterpillar Inc. as an intellectual asset manager, Michele found herself further away from activities that would be necessary for her to acquire her fitness needs. Many years passed and Michele decided it was time to put her fitness needs in the forefront.

When creating Michele's fitness regimen we both realized her fitness needs would be different than many of the other clients I have encountered. This was due to the fact that she had great genetics and was eventually prone to develop fast. That was a concern for myself and Michele. Together we structured a fitness regimen specifically tailored for her needs. We have developed challenges such as her being able to do as many as 75 sit ups, a headstand, and a back bend, which Michele has not performed in over 40 years.

In many ways Michele has reached her fitness goals, and I am pleased to be a part of another successful client. Michele's determination to succeed and overcome the challenges we provide at Fitness Counseling Inc. has enabled her to exhibit more confidence in her fitness ability. Michele enjoys how she feels and looks, and, more importantly, she enjoys partaking in activities with a healthier perspective. Michele's activities include gardening, singing, and acting. In fact, Michele's latest role was in a local film called Heartland.

I am extremely proud to have the opportunity to guide Michele on her fitness quest. Michele's dedication and strong mindset to succeed has helped her achieve her goals. Michele is a fine example for potential exercise enthusiasts to emulate. As Michele said, "If you think you can, then go for it — you will surprise yourself."

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Strength and Will Propelled Him

By Robert J. Schwander,
owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am writing this month's article about an extraordinary client who never ceases to amaze me. I was first introduced to Dr. John Steinwedel through his son, Nathan, who is a member of Fitness Counseling Inc. During the introduction, we conducted a consultation.

Dr. Steinwedel explained to me that he fell while working in his garage. He said that the fall occurred over three years ago and he still has complications with his leg. Dr. Steinwedel went through extensive therapy to no avail; in fact, the therapeutic procedures were extremely painful. Dr. Steinwedel revisited his physician to possibly engage in a different route. When Dr. Steinwedel explained to his physician about the severe pain that he was experiencing with therapy and his decision to discontinue, his physician told him that he failed therapy. For three years, Dr. Steinwedel not only suffered with the complication in his leg, but the situation created other imbalances.

During our consultation, I explained to John that his program would be a gentle process. We established his physical condition and current limitations and devised a regimen tailored for his needs. During the first month, we focused on strengthening basic stabilizer muscles. After about three months, it was very noticeable that he was achieving a higher degree of strength and mobility. Within six months of continuous conditioning, John regained his confidence and decided to schedule a wilderness fishing trip on the Selway River in Idaho. I congratulated John for his decision and we continued to develop ways to improve his condition.

Within 10 months, John had improved significantly; however, a temporary setback had occurred. John was lifting his Labrador Retriever into his suburban and his dog shifted and tried to get free. Unfortunately, John severely strained his lower back. Although the setback was discouraging, we devised a way to overcome it, and in a short period of time, John was back on his way to improving his condition. John's strength and will propelled him to overcome his condition.

I am extremely proud to say that about two months ago, John experienced a wonderful week-long whitewater rafting, hiking, and fishing adventure. John explained to me in explicit detail how magnificent the Selway River was. John enjoyed experiencing nature firsthand. John showed me wonderful pictures of black bear, an eagle, and an osprey and its nest. He also said the pine trees, cedar trees, and the crystal-clear water was an added gift in the adventure.

John explained to me with gratitude that the personal physical challenges that we embarked upon during his conditioning, has helped him fulfill a dream come true. I am extremely proud of John's success and I am even more proud that John wants to continue with his progress. During the adventure, he realized there were some areas that still needed to be addressed; and together, we will do our best to accomplish them.

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A Champion Will Find a Way to Get Up When He is Down

By Robert J. Schwander,
owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am extremely fortunate to have the wonderful opportunity to write this month's article on a client who possesses an immense amount of integrity and kindness, a passion to learn, and a drive to overcome and succeed. David House most definitely has what it takes to succeed. Within the last two years of training with me two times a week, David has taken on many physical challenges and has pretty much conquered all of them. David's fitness regimen is extensive. When the opportunity arises he is quick to take on a 100-mile bike ride or engage in an hour of structured fitness. It is a usual occurrence to enter Fitness Counseling and see David doing 25 push-ups, real chin-ups, or perhaps a three point headstand. One might be impressed that he can do that being in his late 50s. However, a little less than two years ago, David came to me with a concern to change his physical lifestyle. David, an appellate court attorney for the state of Illinois, spends many long hours working at a desk.

David explained to me prior to our encounter the only exercise he was currently doing was

bike riding. Although bike riding is a wonderful form of exercise, David still lacked core and upper body strength. Together we constructed a regimen that would help him develop the strength he desired for his core and upper body. Within a short period of time, David was excelling; he surpassed the foundation building level and was well into a more advanced intermediate level. I was very pleased and enjoyed seeing him succeed with his fitness regimen.

About six months into our routine, I noticed during a training session David was not feeling well. I immediately discontinued our fitness session and insisted he see a physician. David agreed and sought out medical assistance. Fortunately, the condition was not serious; however, the medication David had to take for a month or more seemed to completely take the wind out of his sails. We did not think it would affect his scheduled fitness routines; however, on his first day back David had a lot of trouble finishing five minutes on a stationary bike, and as you recall David was accustomed to riding a hundred miles at a time. We both

decided it would be in his best interest for him to completely recover and allow the medication with its side effects to do its job.

The next month I contacted David to see how he was. Apparently he seemed to be recovering from his illness, but the side effects from the medication were still there. A week or two after our conversation, David attempted to come in to the fitness center and ride the bike. Discouraged and noticeably upset, David explained to me he had no energy and could not do it. Imagine someone you have built a wonderful relationship with and experienced joy with their success suddenly having difficulty doing daily chores. I cannot express what I felt when he went from top to the bottom. Sadly, I thought I truly would not have the opportunity to train with David again.

Fortunately, I was wrong. Within a month, the effects of the medication were wearing off and

David was once again achieving his fitness goals. I stated earlier how David could do 25 push-ups, chin-ups, and a three-point headstand. Amazingly, it was all accomplished again after his return from his illness. To this day, David continues to ride his hundred mile bike challenges and trains with me twice a week. It brings me great joy to see David overcome and conquer challenges every time we train together. I am extremely proud to be a part of his fitness success, and I am more so extremely grateful for his involvement at Fitness Counseling, Inc., and for being a wonderful friend.

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Make Up Your Mind That You Matter

By Robert J. Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

This month's article from Fitness Counseling, Inc. is about member Sue Walker, an amazing woman who has faced adversity after adversity and has managed to overcome and succeed. Sue has faced many challenges and still faces more; however, she has learned to manage them and strive forward with her health and fitness regimen.

Sue stated to me that she always had a problem managing her weight. At 18, she strived to reduce her weight and succeeded, but she practically starved herself. Sue managed to keep the weight off for about four years until she was married. After the first child she gained an extra 10 pounds, and once the second child came she gained another 20 pounds. Sue realized she needed to address her weight gain. She attempted an exercise regimen and a low-carb diet. It didn't last long due to Sue's mother became severely ill and Sue became the primary caretaker. Within a short period of time, Sue found herself in another situation; she had to help her father with his illness, also. Managing and helping ill parents is time consuming and stressful on the caretaker. Sue gained weight and jeopardized her own health. If it wasn't enough to take care of two ill parents, Sue had

to maintain a full-time job at Caterpillar as an IT supervisor, and take care of her children. To add even more pressure, Sue's husband had a brain aneurysm, and she found herself taking care of him also. In Sue's words, her weight and health had deteriorated.

Stressed-out with her father and husband both in the hospital at the same time, she had reached a new level of self-neglect. Overworked and stressed, Sue woke up one morning and realized something was wrong with her and upon going to the hospital, she discovered that she had had a mini stroke. Her self-neglect had taken its toll. Sue's blood pressure was 220/120, her weight was out of control, and she came to a clear-cut decision it was time for *her* to matter. Sue decided to write goals for herself and follow them through to completion. Sue visited her physician to discuss a weight management program and he provided a nutritional plan for her to follow. Sue realized she had to put in the same type of care for *herself* as she did for her parents and husband. Sue also decided it was time for her to incorporate a fitness regimen to help further along her weight loss and fitness condition.

Through it all, Sue has managed to lose more than 70 pounds and is well on her way to becoming the best she can be. Recently Sue has started working with Austin Ferch, a personal trainer at Fitness Counseling, Inc., to help her move further along with her fitness needs. Recently, Sue managed to eliminate many of her medications and reduce another. Sue states once again she's feeling confident, strong, and is much healthier. Sue continues to take care of her husband, with a

wonderful attitude about herself.

Amazingly, through one adversity after another, this amazing woman has managed to overcome and conquer many obstacles and has come to realize that she, too, matters.

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Live Life Gracefully

By Robert J. Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am writing this month's article about a wonderful client who possesses a million-dollar smile and an attitude to go with it.

Nadin Williams worked several years as an office manager for a local neurological group, and then decided to take a position at Caterpillar as an accounts payable manager and continued there for 23 years until she retired. Upon retiring, Nadin set her sights on traveling and planned to visit her daughter in China. In fact, Nadin visited her daughter in China nine times.

Once Nadin's family returned back to the states, Nadin, at the age of 70, realized it was time for her to do something about her physical well-being. Nadin laughs about it now; however, she said it took her four or five months to actually do something about it. A friend suggested Fitness Counseling to her, but Nadin did not know exactly where it was, although she was told it was on Detweiler drive off Knoxville. Nadin told me she drove up and down Knoxville until she found my address. Once she found the location, she made the call and within a day I returned her call and set up an appointment to meet. While discussing Nadin's fitness needs, she explained to me that she had some concerns in regards to bone density, strength, muscle tone, posture, and balance. Nadin told me she was an avid walker; however, she needed to address these physical concerns.

Nadin and I constructed a physical fitness regimen to suit her needs. Together we found specific exercises for functional development. These exercises would maximize her benefits, yet still stay within the age-appropriate guidelines for physical development for seniors. In other words, the exercises that we chose would be considered safe, yet effective, for her goals.

Over the years, Nadin has continued to exercise with me two times per week and also does her best to incorporate some of the physical applications that I have suggested for her to do on her own. There is that occasion when Nadin has to put things on hold to help her daughter and her grandchildren. An example of this was when Nadin's daughter broke her leg and was confined to a wheelchair. Nadin had to travel to Indiana for three months and help take care of the grandchildren and family. She explained to me that her fitness program made a big difference with her adjustment of having to take care of her family's needs.

Although Nadin continues to exercise with me, she also travels to Indiana two to three times per month to help out her daughter and son-in-law with the grandchildren. She also stated that it's not so much helping with the grandchildren as it is the fact that she just loves being with her family.

I am extremely grateful to have such a wonderful opportunity to take care of such a wonderful person. Nadin told me that she feels stronger and more confident and feels good about her acquired leg strength and arm strength.

During our interview for this article Nadin stated that she wants to live gracefully and being more physically fit is helping her reach that goal. Nadin said with a smile and a laugh, "You know Robert, I still love my sweets." I replied, "Yes, I understand."

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This is Your Year to Be Fit and Healthy

By Robert J. Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

Once again a New Year has arrived. Twenty-thirteen has come and gone, but it brought us many experiences that are individually unique. In many regards some have been more challenged than others, with conditions that may not have been in their control. All in all we must focus on reason to maintain or develop a healthier lifestyle according to our specific needs.

Drive and desire, as I stated last year, are key components to our success, whether it is in business, relationships, or fitness. The need to have a balanced life is normal. When one has the desire and drive to seek and develop or fine-tune their life, they

are saying *I consider myself important*. A lot of us feel we are important and have found the right lifestyle solution to fit our needs. Feeling important and being action-oriented enables us to seek better ways to create a healthier lifestyle.

Still there are many who feel that they are important; however, proper desire and drive is needed to have or develop a healthy way of achieving their fitness goals. What is so special about desire? Desire is the driving force — the key to someone's wants or needs. Desire will propel you to achieve; however, desire can be viewed like a furnace — if the heat is low a room will be cool, if the heat is

high a room will be hot. A prime example of a strong desire is when one finds himself at a crossroads in life or a moment such as a new year. Usually a crossroads or challenge for the need to create a healthier lifestyle compels a person to have a strong desire and, in most cases, complete the task. In some cases a New Year's resolution can be a form of desire to succeed, but the tiniest setback puts them on the sideline. A simple setback can turn the fire of desire off. If you mix drive with your desire you will be able to blast through life's little challenges.

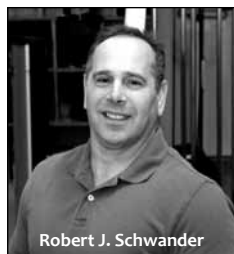
A couple simple keys when applying a sound lifestyle regimen: one key is to visualize and see yourself already successful at your fitness goals, the other is to learn to adjust yourself to the level of your fitness ability every day.

It is important that you realize you and only you are in control of the level of fitness you want to acquire. You have the choice

at every moment whether or not you truly want to succeed. We can come up with many reasons why it will be hard to succeed, but none of those reasons have any power over you if your desire and drive to succeed is strong enough to carry you through to the completion of developing the fitness lifestyle you desire. I view every client I encounter as already being successful, and hope to one day write an article about them. It is up to each client to see and feel what I see in them, and that is that they will be successful.

Finishing this article I would like to wish each and every one of you a blessed, safe, and successful new year.

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Robert J. Schwander

Taking the First Step to Fitness Success

By Marianne House
Member, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

Anyone over 50 knows how hard it can be to take that first step to fitness. We know exercise is the key to fitness, but how in the world can you ever get motivated to start? For me, it was a desire to want to do more things with my husband. Like many people, I needed help to turn that motivation into success. I found that help with Robert Schwander, certified personal trainer and owner of Fitness Counseling, Inc.

“It’s not when you’re at your strongest that you are tested, it’s when you are at your weakest” is one of many motivational sayings strategically posted by Robert on the walls of his gym. Robert listens carefully to each of his clients to help them understand the positive impact of making exercise an important part of their lives. Robert can often be heard telling his clients “your success is my success.”

My husband and I began working with Robert less than two years ago but in this seemingly short time we have truly felt that we have become part of the Fitness Counseling family. Robert’s dynamic personality and knowledge of fitness

and his fully equipped gym have made us feel comfortable and empowered. We look forward to workout sessions and are really disappointed when we have to miss a training session — like during the extreme weather last month.

As an avid bicyclist, working out for my husband was about getting in better shape and gaining strength and stamina. He researched area gyms and trainers and met with Robert. They’ve developed a great relationship. I was never an exercise enthusiast but I was tired of just sitting around gaining unwanted pounds and inches. Robert helped me take my first step toward fitness. Sometimes it’s hard for me to stay motivated because I feel that I am still so far away from reaching my ideal weight and strength. Robert helps me get past those times. He listens and understands my frustrations and has the ability to mix things up periodically by creating fun and safe exercise sessions that help build me up emotionally as well as physically. I’ve uncovered a competitive nature that keeps me pushing to become stronger and more

fit whether I am battling ropes, pulling a weighted sled, or even flipping a car tire outside of the gym! Robert has helped us maintain a sense of pride about our current abilities and keeps us both interested in wanting to achieve more.

My husband and I just finished a year of bicycling together that gave us great pleasure. I’ve discovered a fun and accessible activity that we can enjoy as a couple. In July, we will take another weeklong bike ride together. Robert will help me develop an exercise strategy to prepare safely for the long route and hills. This year he’s also helping me become more aware and conscientious about nutrition and the key role it plays in our daily life.

Oftentimes you meet people who impact your life positively and you forget or just don’t take the opportunity to thank them personally or publicly for their help. Trainers may work with a

client for a few sessions or years and then suddenly the client may stop exercising or move out of the area. A trainer may wonder if they really made a difference to that person. We wanted to take the time to thank Robert on a personal level and in this column for making a positive difference in our lives and in the lives of so many others. Thanks Robert for being a champion of the weaker as well as the strong, and for your fitness expertise and personal friendship. Thanks to you, we are becoming stronger, more positive, and more powerful. To use a favorite phrase — Bam!

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Standing Strong and Staying Strong

By Robert Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am writing this month's article on Keith Sherman. Keith has been a wonderful addition to Fitness Counseling, Inc. since 2009, and is an amazing man with an amazing background. He is in his 70s and retired but has an amazing work history. As a young man, Keith worked on a farm for 10 years, then in a strip coal mine, and then for the American Can Company. In his later years, Keith worked for Caterpillar Inc. as a president of risk management services. He was in charge of cash, property, and casualty insurance. He was also in charge of the Western Hemisphere, including U.S. and Canada, foreign exchange commodities and interest rates.

In high school, Keith was quite the athlete. He was an all-state basketball player averaging 28 points and 19 rebounds per game. Keith also played college basketball; however, once he graduated and found himself in the workforce, he realized he needed to maintain his physical condition. Keith decided to partake in a 10-year study with a local hospital on the effects of exercise and health. Realizing the benefits of exercise and its effects on health, Keith decided to continue an exercise regimen that suited his needs. At the present time, he continues to perform a well-balanced exercise regimen. Keith realizes he needs to maintain his strength so he

can continue to enjoy gardening, working on antique cars, and fishing. Strength is crucial for Keith's fishing due to the fact that he fishes for large lake trout and halibut.

I met Keith in 2009. We talked a little bit about fitness, and he told me he was looking for a new fitness facility because the facility he was training in was closing. I usually do not push my facility on people, but talking to Keith I realized he would be a perfect fit for Fitness Counseling, Inc. I am glad I invited him to join because he is not only a wonderful addition to my facility, but he has also become one of my best friends. Keith and I have spent many wonderful moments fishing together in various strip mines and lakes in the area. Keith has given me many wonderful fishing tips with which I have landed some trophy fish. I can truly say inviting Keith to my facility, and having the privilege to suggest various exercises to help better balance his fitness regimen, was truly one of the best things I have done — for Fitness Counseling, Inc., for Keith, and for myself.

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Spring Into Fitness

By Robert Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

How wonderful it is that spring has finally arrived, and now it's time to partake in some of those wonderful outdoor activities. For months during the record-breaking snowfall this winter, many of us have found a way to continue working on our fitness regimens. I have been fortunate enough to experience strength in many forms during this long, cold winter.

One of those many experiences happened to come from Robin Wilson, OD, of Wilson Eye Care Center. Dr. Robin Wilson has been my client for over a year. Upon our initial evaluation, she explained to me that she was in a previous car accident and required

a hip replacement. Together we devised a simple fitness regimen to enable her to maintain lower extremity strength and muscle tone for her upcoming operation. The simple improvement of her lower body strength went as expected. Dr. Robin Wilson was prepared for her hip replacement. Upon receiving her hip replacement, Robin was determined to re-engage in her fitness regimen after she completed her physical therapy. Once Robin was released from physical therapy, she contacted me and we set a plan to help her reestablished her lower body strength and body tone. Her first workouts went extremely well following some of the simple

basics. Robin expressed a high level of optimism and was determined to overcome her temporary setback.

Adversity has a way of challenging our innermost spirit. With one complication conquered, Robin found herself in one of the most challenging experiences one can find themselves in. During an examination, her concerns were brought to the attention of her physician. Tests were conducted and Robin found out that she was in the late stages of cancer. Immediately, she did what she had to do for what was necessary to ensure the recovery. For an extensive period of time, Robin experienced a physical struggle that no one can measure. Robin expressed that she continually had to not only care for her physical well-being, she also had to muster up enough mental strength to propel her forward one day at a time. Robin exhibited immense courage and strength working through the chemotherapy and infections that she endured.

This winter was long, cold, and harsh for all of us; however, for some of us, it was more so. I am proud to say that Dr. Robin Wilson endured and overcame many challenges and is once again training with me and working out on her own. Robin no longer is concerned about her past condition; now, however, she is more concerned about a few pounds she gained due to medications. I have no doubt in my mind that she has the ability to do whatever it takes to succeed, not only at losing a few pounds, but also at anything she puts her mind to. So spring has arrived and it looks like the majority of us once again have a new beginning. I hope you are truly healthy, and that you do yourself a favor and find a way to spring into fitness.

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I Believe in You

By Robert Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

This month's article is dedicated to you, the reader. For the past three years, I have written many articles on many wonderful clients and members of Fitness Counseling Inc. Many of the clients and members that I have written about overcame seemingly insurmountable circumstances, by reinventing a new and healthier lifestyle. In this article I will do my best to encourage you and guide you on your personal fitness journey.

First and foremost, if you are seeking to begin a fitness regimen, you must receive the approval of your physician. He or she will evaluate your current condition and help you with specific guidelines for you to follow.

If your physician has given you the approval to exercise and suggests that you need to create a healthier lifestyle through exercise and proper nutrition then consider yourself fortunate because you have been given a second chance to partake on a wonderful journey to create a change or a new beginning.

If this is the very first time you are embarking on a fitness regimen, or if you have not exercised in the last five years, depending upon your personal condition and health needs, there are certain forms of exercise you may consider. Tai chi, for example, is a slow-moving yet wonderful way to get your body moving again. It will also help you determine whether or not you may have some mobility limitations. The movements in tai chi are very smooth and will allow your body to gently

adjust to the changes in your motion. Also for the beginner, a gentle form of yoga may help with breathing, mobility, and strength. For some of you, this may be all you really need to help you feel better; others may decide to seek a more advanced fitness solution. It is wonderful to advance but I advise my clients that the first level is to develop a strong foundation. In other words, if you were to build a house on sand, how stable will the structure be? It is of the utmost importance to have a strong, stable core before starting more advanced exercises. You may also decide you like resistance training, which involves strengthening and toning through weights and machines. Resistance training done correctly has many wonderful benefits such as strengthening bones, ligaments, and tendons, increases muscle tone, improves metabolic rate and overall strength.

There are many forms of exercise to help you on your journey, you must choose what is right for you personally and what will continue to keep you inspired and motivated to succeed. Finding something that you enjoy is part of the success. Exercise is very important and just as important is finding the right nutritional balance to fit your personal needs. There are so many nutritional plans, diets, programs, pills, and potions. What works, what doesn't work — wow, one can say that it is mind-boggling. There are some basic simple truths when it comes to proper nutrition and eating healthy. In general, if you want to feel better and you want to look better,

then consciously choose foods that are healthier for your lifestyle. The less processed your foods are, the better chance you have to succeed. Make the right choices for your needs, such as fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits, proper protein sources that fit your health needs, healthy complex carbohydrates, and quality sources of fat to fit your consumption needs.

You have what it takes to succeed. Have faith in yourself,

take action, and tell yourself you are strong, you are positive, and you are powerful! Although I may not have met you, I believe in you.

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She is Strong, Positive, and Powerful

By Robert Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

Darren Fry, a massage therapist and owner and operator of Body Mechanics, introduced me to Amy Poparad about five months ago.

During our initial meeting, Amy explained to me that she needed to develop a stronger, sound body and lose some unwanted inches. Amy also explained to me that she wanted to reach a specific goal, and that goal was to get into the best shape of her life. Amy explained to me that she couldn't do it on her own and needed the guidance of a fitness coach to help her through the process. Although Amy does not understand some of the principles of fitness, she is extremely smart. Amy works for Caterpillar Inc. and is in charge of global product support marketing information for electrical power.

After we concluded with the consultation, we had an understanding of what needed to be done in order for Amy to achieve her goals. Amy and I decided to set up a specific time to meet for a physical evaluation. During the evaluation, I noticed that Amy needed to develop core strength, better flexibility, and upper and lower body strength. Amy also indicated she had a shoulder complication. Together we set up a specific time of the week to meet. During the next few months, we worked on improving her total body strength, flexibility, and improved the range of motion in her shoulder helping her to relieve her shoulder discomfort. Amazingly, Amy has reached many of her goals in a short period of time. Her overall body strength and flexibility has improved and Amy has re-

ceived an added bonus — she lost 5-3/4 inches within that period of time.

Amy expressed to me once we started her specific fitness regimen that once she knew she was going to me for her goals, she said she allowed herself to relax and listen and do what was necessary to achieve maximum results. Amy is truly enjoying her specialized fitness regimen; in fact, she said that she is having fun reaching her new goals.

I truly enjoy the experience I have had, and continue to have, training and consulting Amy on her fitness journey. Amy is truly a pleasure to work with. She always does her best and exercises with passion. I am also grateful that Amy has included me in her success. She recently sent me a wonderful card with a big number one on the front; I truly appreciate that gesture. Although she includes me in her success, Amy already had what it took internally to get to where she is in fitness. On the wall at Fitness Counseling is a poster that says, "You are: strong, positive, powerful." Amy truly demonstrates every one of those words. In fact, she told me that the words "strong, positive powerful" are embedded in her mind and body. Once again, I congratulate Amy and I truly agree with her that she is strong, positive, and powerful.

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Marianne Takes It to Another Level

By Robert Schwander,
Owner, Fitness Counseling, Inc.

I am extremely proud to be able to write this month's article on Marianne House, one of Fitness Counseling's most amazing clients. I was first introduced to her on March 13, 2012. David House, her husband and a client of mine, suggested to me that I should train Marianne. David told me it would be wonderful if she started an exercise regimen. David also said Marianne was never athletic and never followed an exercise program.

When I met Marianne, I was extremely surprised to see how excited she was to start a healthier lifestyle. During the consultation, Marianne discussed some of her past conditions and her physical concerns. She also expressed that she wanted to decrease weight, increase endurance and stamina, increase her strength, and ride a bicycle longer than 20 miles.

Within the first few months of training Marianne, I was able to experience her phenomenal drive and desire to reach her goals. Marianne excelled through the basics and has stood strong through all the challenges I have brought to her. Through her persistence, Marianne learned how to do real push-ups, a three-point headstand, and has accomplished many other fitness goals, but her biggest challenges were yet to come. Using strength development and selective endurance exercises, Marianne trained for the 2013 RAGBRAI bike ride across Iowa. Marianne did very well on the bike ride; however, she stopped 50 miles short of the 422-mile journey. For the 2014 bike ride across Iowa, we trained with better nutrition and more selective exercises. I am proud

to say Marianne completed the 418-mile bike ride that had 10,752 total feet of climb.

Mariann has accomplished many amazing feats at Fitness Counseling such as doing the battling ropes for 10 minutes, then 30 minutes, and continues to hold the record of one hour and 2 minutes. Marianne also goes through a strength-developing regimen twice a week with me as her trainer. On her own, Marianne loves to pull the sled, carry the slosh pipe, and has flipped the tractor tire over 100 times.

Marianne never ceases to amaze me. She has outstanding strength and a solid will to succeed and conquer any challenge. Marianne has not only gained strength; she has also lost over 31 pounds, developed quality muscle, and has lost over 37 inches. With her dedication and desire to succeed, she will continue to lose the weight she desires.

Currently we are preparing her for a bike ride that is 100 miles in one day. She has come a long way from her goal of a 20-mile bike ride! Marianne has never played any organized sports nor even exercised before joining Fitness Counseling; however, she now has developed the confidence and knowledge she needs to take it to another level. I am proud to say, and am truly grateful, that she has become one of my most spectacular clients.

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