

# PT HEALTH COACHING

## Motivation

One of the most difficult things about changing a behaviour is finding the motivation to make the change and keeping hold of that motivation to maintain that new behaviour. Here are some helpful tips that I use with my clients, which, if you commit to them, will support you to stay motivated throughout your journey:

### **1. Have a reason:**

It's important to have a reason for wanting to make change. If you are just 'playing' at lifestyle change, the chances are you will fail. By thinking about the main reason you want to make a change and writing it down, you are more likely to stick to it. If there is a strong emotion behind your reason, this will be even more powerful. Have your 'reason' somewhere that you look at every morning: on front of the fridge, on the back of the front door or on your phone's home screen. It could be a picture, a note, a poem or a simple word that serves as a constant reminder of why you are doing what you are doing.

### **2. Be realistic:**

Any goal you set must have its place in the real world. Goals are one of the most important tools to keep you motivated. However, if they are unrealistic, they can actually become a demotivator. Thinking to yourself: 'I want a six pack like Anthony Joshua' or 'I want to be as slim as I was at 18' are unrealistic. Why? Because you are not Anthony Joshua and you are not 18 anymore. It's important to come to terms with reality and give yourself targets that are realistic and achievable. 'I'd like to drop a dress size by the summer' or 'I'd like to be able to run for 10 minutes without stopping' are much more realistic targets. Setting yourself unrealistic targets leads to failure and you will lose motivation. Don't trip yourself up, before you've even started.

### **3. It has to fit with you:**

Choosing a lifestyle plan has to fit in with you. Of course, there will be an element of difficulty to begin with, like making any change, but ultimately, it must fit into your daily life. There is a chunk of give and take here: you must be disciplined and plan your days, but also, that must be doable. For example, if you choose a lifestyle plan that involves hours of cooking and hours of exercise and you have a very busy life with work, household chores, young children etc.... you must question if the plan is for you. Similarly, choosing a strict diet, where you are heavily restricted on calories or particular foods may also be difficult to maintain. Therefore, choose a plan that is right for you (you can even take bits from a variety of plans to make your own).

#### 4. **Keep records:**

This doesn't mean you have to go and buy a journal (although you can if you want to!). There are a variety of apps or ways that you can keep a track of your progress online. Keeping a track of how you are feeling, your measurements, your eating habits and/or your physical activity levels can be really motivational and help you stick to your plan. My Fitness Pal is a great app that I use regularly to keep track of my eating habits.

#### 5. **Celebrate your successes:**

And I don't mean with a 14" pizza and a bottle of wine... when you have reached a particular stage of your plan, whether it's your first stone of weight loss or your first 5km run or your first walk to a particular point without stopping to rest, celebrate. Social media or community pages are great places to share your successes and get support. Other tangible rewards (that are healthy) might include: buying yourself something nice (a book, DVD, some music, a new workout outfit), going out (trip to the cinema, theme park, visit a friend) or even something simple like treating yourself to some 'me time'. Time without screaming kids or a list of chores, just some time to chill out, have a hot bath, go for a massage or put your feet up and relax.

#### 6. **Make a pledge:**

Make it public – "I'm going to get back to a size 12 by this time next year". If you share it and you have buy in from others, you are more likely to stick to it. It's the accountability element that is sometimes the most powerful. If you have to tell somebody else that you've failed, it can be more difficult than just letting yourself down. So share with somebody your goal, to add accountability and to increase your support network.

#### 7. **Plan:**

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Benjamin Franklin.

By planning ahead and planning for any eventuality you are more likely to stay on track and stay motivated. Think of the upcoming barriers and what you can do to manage/overcome them. There will always be birthdays, nights out, meals with friends, Christmas parties, but if you plan ahead, you can still enjoy these without going off the rails all together. There are always the stressors in life: lack of sleep, illness, car breaking down, rubbish day at work, a row with your partner, a missed bus etc etc. Everyone has them. You are not alone. So, don't let these get you down, they are a part of life. Try instead to think of ways to make yourself feel better. Could you utilise breathing techniques, meditation, and some time out? A cake and a bottle of wine aren't going to give you a hug and make you feel better. You'll only end up feeling guilty, demoralised and your body will be under more stress the next day trying to deal with last night's over indulgence. So.... Plan your exercise, plan your meals for the week (including your shopping list), plan some 'me time' and ask the question when you've had a particularly difficult day, "What will actually help me feel better now?"

**8. Be kind to yourself:**

One thing I say to all of my clients is "Stop beating yourself up and try to be kind to yourself". The amount of people who fall off the wagon and go on a continuous downward spiral as a result of that one slip up, is huge. When you do have a blip or a binge, let it be a one off. There will be a reason why it happened. Learn from it, so that it doesn't happen next time (or as frequently). Be kind to yourself, rather than beating yourself up. Start the next day a fresh and move forwards.

**9. Enjoy what you do:**

Not all healthy pursuits are horrible or boring. You may actually find that they are quite enjoyable. Trying a new activity or a new recipe may bring some enjoyment and if you enjoy something, you are more likely to stay motivated and keep doing it. Do a new activity with a friend, take back up something you previously enjoyed (but have struggled to fit it in), cook for others, not just yourself. A word of advice, don't overdo it though, try and mix things up occasionally to prevent boredom slipping in.

**10. Seek professional help:**

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you will not be able to summon up the motivation on your own. This is where a professional comes in... like me! A personal health coach will help with food and exercise planning, provide positive feedback and reassurance, help you set realistic and achievable goals, monitor your progress and provide you with the accountability you may need. All these things are extremely motivational and will help you stay on track

For more information and support with your lifestyle goals, contact Paul on **07495 892987**, [Paul@pthhealthcoaching.com](mailto:Paul@pthhealthcoaching.com) or [www.pthhealthcoaching.com](http://www.pthhealthcoaching.com)