

New Year. New Smile.

Joel A. Gentry, DDS



A new year is a great time to create goals to improve your overall health. Many of us think immediately about eating more wisely, starting an exercise program, or getting more quality sleep. But science clearly shows us that an important part of your overall wellness is right under your nose ... your oral health. Now is a great time to include some of the following as you contemplate your resolutions for 2018.

1. Improve your tooth brushing and flossing habits

Daily tooth brushing and flossing is a simple way to improve your oral health. In order to reduce the bacteria-laden plaque from your teeth and gums, it is important to brush at least twice daily using a soft bristle toothbrush (preferably battery powered) with a fluoridated toothpaste. Be sure to brush gently but thoroughly at the gumline where most plaque accumulates. Flossing once daily is the only way to remove the sticky plaque from between your teeth and combining it with an antimicrobial mouthwash will help prevent gum disease and fight halitosis.

2. Healthier food and beverage choices

An important part of improving your oral health is to think about what you feed it each day. A regular diet of carbohydrates and sugary snacks are the fuel for the bacteria in your mouth to produce acids, resulting in tooth decay. Soft drinks, sweet tea, coffee with sugar, and other similar beverages should be consumed with a meal and limited between them. The longer your teeth are exposed to sugar, the greater the risk of decay. One of the most destructive habits, especially in the winter, is to use cough drops or similar lozenges throughout the day, unknowingly subjecting the teeth to a bath of sugar for hours on end. One of the healthiest steps you can take for your teeth and your body is to stay hydrated ... with water. Just water.

3. Improving your smile

There are a number of products that can whiten your smile safely and effectively. Although over-the-counter whitening agents

can be effective for some, you should always consult with your dentist about the best choice to brighten your smile. Professionally applied whitening agents, at home or at the office, will provide you the fastest and most consistent results. Remember that crowns, veneers, and white fillings will not change color, only tooth structure.

4. Braces

Your goal for the new year may include finally correcting crowded or spaced teeth for your best smile. There are several options for straightening your teeth, including clear brackets and removable retainers, which are very popular for adults. Personally speaking, I just had braces placed on my teeth at age 54 to correct some minor relapses that developed since I first wore braces in middle school. Why not now?

5. Quit using tobacco products

There is *nothing* you can do to improve your oral health more than ceasing to use any tobacco products, including smokeless. Consider smoking cessation groups, which are shown to be more effective than any other strategy to kick the habit.

6. Routine dental visits

A resolution to make routine visits to the dentist may help prevent or reveal dental disease in its early stage when it is easiest and the least expensive to treat. Recent research has confirmed the time-honored advice of semi-annual exams to allow your dentist and hygienist to monitor the condition of your oral health and develop a plan to meet your wants and needs.

Here's wishing you a year of smiles in 2018.

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fitness focus TL Fitness - Torrey Lowe

THE LIFE of a Personal Trainer

Have you ever wondered what a personal trainer goes through in a typical day? People who have never had a personal trainer may get the impression that trainers are fitness fanatics who make people "run, sweat a lot, lift things, and put things down," but anyone who has spent time with a good trainer knows that they are life-changers. Here is an inside look at my life as a personal trainer and owner of TL Fitness in High Point, NC.

The Sacrifices

A typical day for me begins at 5 a.m. Those days consists of giving motivation, direction, words of encouragement, and support to help people reach their personal goals. I help people fight health issues, make people stronger, and push them to live a healthier longer life. My day ends around 8:30 p.m., but the long days of encouraging, motivating, and helping people are what I live for. This has become who I am; it defines me in every way. I want my clients to reach their goals and live a better lifestyle, so I provide resources and support to ensure they do.

The Connections

For the past ten years, I have been a trainer and have built relationships with each client. These relationships I build are essential in helping clients reach their overall goals. When a client comes to me, they put their trust in me. They rely on me to establish a plan to help them reach their individual goals. Most importantly, they rely on me to be knowledgeable, encouraging, understanding, and motivating. I build relationships with my clients to build trust and create an environment where they feel comfortable taking risks and pushing themselves.

The Rewards

I want my clients to internalize what they learn and continue to live a healthy lifestyle. Once my clients realize they can push themselves, make healthier choices, and see results, I know I have done my job. I awaken a passion inside them, a drive if you will, that they never knew they had. One of the biggest rewards in being a personal trainer is to see that drive in my clients - seeing them change from unhappy, unmotivated, or insecure to happy, motivated, and confident. Personal training is more than a job for me; it's my way of life. I couldn't imagine doing anything else. For me, there is no other profession as rewarding and fulfilling as training people. The people I train motivate and encourage me to keep going as much as I motivate them.



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