

PLANNING FOR Success & COMMITTING TO Change

by Tiffany Esser



*Why are you reading this article? I bet it's because you're looking for a positive change in your life. Well, you've come to the right place. No matter who you are, what you weigh, or how hopeless you might feel about your health, I'm here to tell you that you do have the power to regain control and change your life in ways you've never imagined possible. Here's the thing: deciding to change is easy; **acting** on it is another story.*

Rest assured, I'm not going to lie to you. But by telling you the truth, I may not be giving you what you want to hear. Changing your life for the better is not quick or easy — like anything that's worthwhile, positive transformation takes resolve, patience and diligence. But as any one of my clients can tell you, the results of my program are well worth the effort. You have to want to be healthy for yourself...not for your spouse, family, co-workers, but for you! Once you can realize the reasons *why* you want to eat a plant-based diet and get moving, the greater your chances are for success. I tell every one of my clients, and I'm telling you — set yourself up for success, not for failure.

Imagine, for a moment, your body as a car: if you're not eating right and you're not getting enough exercise, you are gaining weight and moving in reverse; if you're eating right *and* getting exercise, you will kick-start yourself into drive. Now, step back and take a good look at your life today. And be honest. Are you happy with your status quo?

If not, are you ready to let go of the excuses that have held you back in the past and really move toward change? Think about what you want out of life: whether it's to see your grandchildren take their first steps, to build a family with your spouse, or to feel good about yourself so that you can be in a healthy relationship. Face your desires and your fears and embrace them. No matter what your goals are, you can reach them if you are willing to do the work, and are committed to becoming your best no matter how long it might take.

It's easy to make excuses. You know what I'm talking about. I hear them all the time, things like, "I don't have the money to afford a gym membership or a trainer," or, "I don't have the time between work and family responsibilities," or, "I'm genetically predisposed to obesity." Insert whatever totally lame excuse you like — *you* create your own reality, and if you believe you are destined to fail, chances are you will. However, if you believe you're worth it and focus on *why* you want to be healthy, you can achieve

almost anything you want.

It's not going to be easy to change your life, but don't worry — it's not going to be torture either. If you've already made positive lifestyle changes to eating a plant-based diet, exercising, getting enough sleep and creating emotional poise, then you've experienced the benefits of a well-balanced Hygienic lifestyle. But if you have people in your life who are struggling with the changes, tell them this: I know it's scary to confront yourself, look at your life up close, and really move toward change, but you don't have to do it alone. I'm here to be your support system and help you uncover your potential for a better life and a better you. Once you start seeing how strong you really are and what you are capable of, the sky's the limit and you will succeed.

With any behavior modification, we must learn the techniques for forming healthy habits and be committed to change. I always provide my clients with research articles and lecture videos of Dr. Alan Goldhamer, Jeffrey Novick, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, Dr. Joel Fuhrman and Dr. John McDougall. These are the men on the front lines battling obesity and diseases by promoting a plant-based diet for our nation. It's important to get back to basics by eating whole fruits and vegetables as well as adding whole-grains as healthy carbohydrates into our diets as our main source of energy (oatmeal, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta). Food is our fuel and it will help us maintain life-long health and decrease our risks of metabolic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Once you are committed to change and are ready to begin exercise, you should consult with your physician to get the go-ahead. Then, just get moving — go for a walk, hike, bike ride, swim or play tennis. Find an activity you enjoy and rock it! I'd recommend a personal trainer to help you begin a full-body strength-training program with low weights and high repetitions to increase total body muscle mass, which will boost your basal metabolic rate (metabolism) by converting fat into lean muscle. Once you have reached your ideal weight (Body Mass Index of 18.5-24) your active metabolic rate (AMR) increases. This means that you can eat more calories because your lean muscle mass is burning up more calories than fat. Still, a plant-based diet is calorically low in nature. So make sure you are eating sufficient calories for your exercise expenditure.

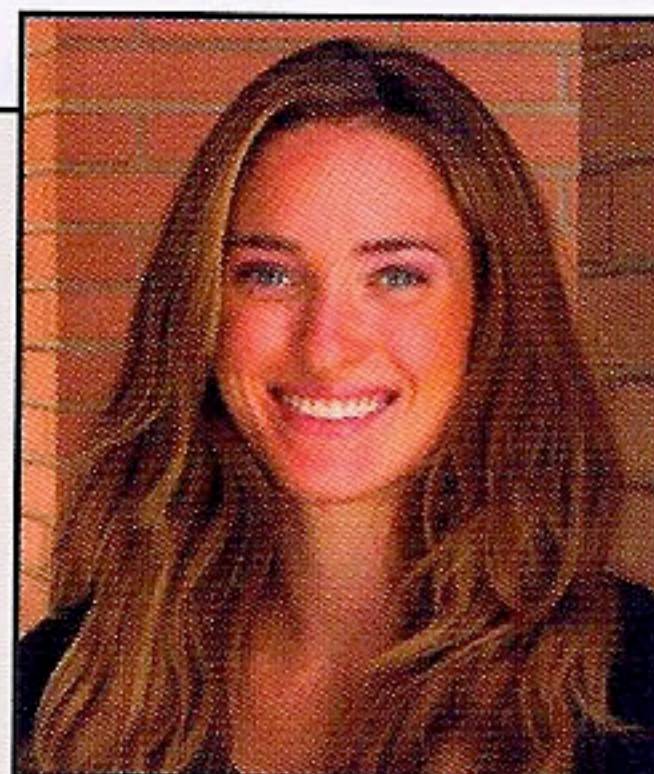
A knowledgeable trainer will also set up a cardio program for you on your own, because cardiovascular fitness will strengthen your heart muscle. You want your heart rate elevated to a moderate-advanced range (Calculate your Maximum Heart Rate: $220 - \text{Age} = \text{MHR}$. A moderate level is 70-85 percent of your MHR, and that is the range you want to aim for during your workout). You need a

variety in your workouts. I train my clients 2-3 times a week for one hour, and then they perform cardio 3 times a week for 30-minutes to one hour on their own. Even if you dedicate 30-minutes a day to exercise you will feel the benefits. Exercise reduces your risk of Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and depression.

Remember that during this time of change it is important to maintain emotional poise and balance. If you are stressed from work duties or family responsibilities, you will release stress hormones into the body, such as cortisol, which inhibit weight loss, causing your body to react by storing fat and retaining water out of self-protection. A Hygienic lifestyle is about *total* health. The changes you implement in your life are permanent. Make sure to live out the seven tenets of Natural Hygiene: clean air, clean water, clean food, exercise, sunshine, sleep, and emotional poise.

I am hoping that after all you've read and learned here, you will now look at your life in new ways, with deeper insight and understanding. The bottom line is you can never go back to your old way of life if you whole-heartedly embrace these changes toward success. As you grow and change, so does the need for self-discovery. It's an ongoing process, and it can continue only with the right motivation and mindset. Re-evaluate your goals every month and challenge yourself in a realistic mindset. Make sure your goals are S.M.A.R.T. They should be *Specific* in what type of exercise; *Measureable* in distance; *Attainable* in that it is achievable and appropriate; *Realistic* in that you are capable to complete it; and *Timely* in that you know how long you'll exercise or how long it will take you to reach the goal. I advise goals to be even S.M.A.R.T.E.R. (SMART plus *Evaluate* the goal over the first month; *Re-evaluate* over months and years).

My current fitness goal is to run a marathon. I will be running the Boston Marathon, a total of 26.2 miles in April 2011. So you better keep me honest about my goal at next summer's National Health Association's Conference. Let's support each other. You *CAN* reach your goals. Now get out there and succeed in positive lifestyle change!



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