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# New Year's Kick-Start

Workouts, meal plans, and mindset tips to make

**2024** the **fittest** year of your life.

# Welcome

My goal with this guide is to help you make more progress in 2024 than you have in the past 5 years.

If you're motivated but don't have a plan, this guide is for you. If you came up short last year - despite your best efforts - this guide is for you. If you're ready to make 2024 the fittest year of your life, this guide is for you.

I've broken down this guide into 3 sections:

1. The Workouts
2. The Diet
3. The Mindset

If you'd like to skim, you can find the workouts, meal plans, and mindset "equation" first in each section. You can follow these blindly and still see results.

If you're interested in the "why" behind the components, you can check out the deeper dive that follows. If you learn the underlying concepts, you'll be better equipped to have success over the long run!

## The Workouts

### Day 1: Full Body Strength

- Exercise 1: [Barbell Deadlift](#). 4 sets of 4-6 reps. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 2: [Bench Press](#). 4 sets of 4-6 reps. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 3: [Dumbbell Reverse Lunge](#). 3 sets of 8-10 reps each leg. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 4: [Pull-Ups](#) (Or [Pull Downs](#)). 3 sets of 8-10 reps. 90 seconds rest.
- Exercise 5: [RKC Plank](#). 3 sets of 45 seconds. 90 seconds rest.

### Day 2: Moderate Intensity Cardio

Choose your preferred cardio activity (e.g. walking, cycling, running, etc) and maintain a moderate intensity (speaking should be challenging, but not impossible) for 30-45 minutes.

### Day 3: Full Body Muscle Gain

- Exercise 1: [Bulgarian Split Squats](#). 3 sets of 10-12 reps each leg. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 2: [Push Ups](#) (Or [Flat Dumbbell Press](#)). 3 sets of 15-20 reps. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 3: [Romanian Deadlifts](#). 3 sets of 10-12 reps. 90 seconds rest.
- Exercise 4: [Seated Cable Row](#). 3 sets of 10-12 reps. 90 seconds rest.
- Exercise 5: [Barbell Bicep Curls](#). 3 sets of 12-15 reps. 90 seconds rest.
- Exercise 6 (OPTIONAL): [Dumbbell Side Raise](#). 3 sets of 12-15 reps. 90 seconds rest.

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### Day 4: High Intensity Cardio

Choose your preferred cardio activity and alternate between 1 minute of 80-90% intensity and 1 minute of recovery. x20-30 total minutes.

### Day 5: Full Body Strength

- Exercise 1: [Barbell Squat](#). 4 sets of 6 reps. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 2: [Dumbbell Rows](#). 4 sets of 8 reps. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 3: [Incline Dumbbell Chest Press](#). 3 sets of 10 reps. 2 minutes rest.
- Exercise 4: [Neutral Grip Pull Down](#). 3 sets of 10 reps. 90 seconds rest.
- Exercise 5: [Single Leg Glute Bridge](#). 3 sets of 10-12 reps. 90 seconds rest.
- Exercise 6 (OPTIONAL): [Dumbbell Calf Raise](#). 3 sets of 10-12 reps. 90 seconds rest.

**Day 6: Rest** (You can do more moderate intensity cardio and/or mobility, if you feel like it).

**Day 7: Rest** (You can do more moderate intensity cardio and/or mobility, if you feel like it).

## The “Why” Behind The Workouts

For decades, it was thought that the 8-12 rep range was optimal for hypertrophy (i.e. muscle gain). It turns out that training with any weight greater than 30% of your max is effective for muscle gain.

Translation - you can do sets with as little as 5 reps or as many as 30 reps. **As long as you train within a few reps shy of muscular failure - you will gain muscle!**

Why? Because you build muscle in 3 ways: mechanical tension, muscle damage, and metabolic stress For a deep dive on these three drivers of muscle growth, check out my article below:

[HOW to Get Jacked - 3 Mechanisms of Hypertrophy](#)

**A quick overview:**

Lower-rep, high-weight sets generate **mechanical tension**. These sets cause muscle fibers to recruit more motor units, leading to greater force production. This triggers muscle growth and strength gains, essential components of a toned physique.

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**Muscle damage** is another mechanism for muscle growth. Intense weightlifting can lead to micro-tears in muscle fibers, which, when repaired, result in muscle growth. Low-rep, high-weight sets cause significant muscle damage. This contributes to both muscle development and muscle tone.

**Metabolic stress**, the "burn" you feel during high-rep sets, also plays a role. High-rep sets aren't the best for mechanical tension and muscle damage, but they create metabolic stress. This stress can enhance muscle endurance and definition.

Here's what each three of the muscle-building mechanisms look like in terms of **intensity, rep range, and rest periods**:

### **Mechanical Tension**

- Heavy strength work, 1-5 reps, 2-5 min rest.

### **Muscle Damage**

- Slow and controlled work, 3-12 reps, 90 sec-3 min rest.

### **Metabolic Stress**

- Higher rep work >65% intensity, 6-15 reps, 30-90 sec rest.

High rep sets contribute to metabolic stress and endurance. Low-rep sets provide the necessary mechanical tension and muscle damage for muscle growth. To take advantage of each driver of muscle growth, include a variety of rep ranges in your training.

### How To Progress Your Workouts

Over time, you need to increase the weight, volume, or intensity of your workouts to build muscle. This is where the concept of progressive overload comes into play.

**Progressive overload** is the process of gradually increasing the intensity of your workouts. To push your body to adapt (i.e. to grow muscle or lose fat), you need to send it the appropriate signals.

You can progress your workouts in a few different ways to accelerate strength gains. For this program, I recommend you use a method called **double progression**.

### Here's how double progression works:

- You start with a **challenging weight** for each exercise. "Challenging" means by the end of set, you only have 1-3 reps left before muscular failure.
- For example, if you can bench press 100 pounds for a max 8 reps, it would be a good choice for the 4-6 rep range (because at 6 reps, you would have 2 "in the tank.")
- **Increase the number of reps within a specific rep range before increasing the weight.** For example, Week 1 you may be able to bench press 100 pounds for 1 set of 6 and 2 sets of 5. Week 2, you may be able to do 100 pounds for 3 sets of 6.
- Once you reach the upper limit of the rep range, **increase the weight and start again at the lower end of the rep range (in your next workout).**
- In this example, you'd start next week with benching 105 and stick with that weight until you can do three sets of 6. Then, progress to 110, and so on.
- **Remember, the goal is to finish each set with between 1-3 reps left "in the tank."** 1-3 reps shy of muscular failure.



### General Periodization Strategies:

#### 1. Linear Periodization

This approach involves gradually increasing the weight and reducing the reps as your training cycle progresses. For example, squatting 100 lbs for 10 reps the first week, 110 lbs for 10 reps the second week, 120 lbs for 10 reps the third week.

#### 2. Undulating Periodization:

With undulating periodization, you frequently change the rep and weight schemes within the week. For example, on Monday you may have a high volume/low intensity squat day (let's say 3 sets of 12 at 100 pounds). On Friday, you may have a low volume/high intensity squat day (3 sets of 2 at 150 pounds).

#### 3. Block Periodization:

Block periodization involves breaking your training into distinct blocks, each focusing on different aspects of your fitness. For example, you might have hypertrophy-focused blocks for 4-12 weeks, where you emphasize higher volume, moderate intensity training. Then, you might shift to a strength block, with a focus on low volume, high intensity training.

You can get into the weeds with these, but it's not necessary! **If you're challenging yourself and taking most sets close to failure, you will make great progress.**

### The Workouts - Key Takeaways

- **Don't worry about finding the "perfect" routine** - A simple routine that prioritizes progressive overload will always trump one with unneeded complexity. This is especially true if you haven't ever trained with intensity or consistency.
- **Strength train 2-5x/week** - Focus on compound lifts, take most sets 1-3 reps shy of muscular failure, and never sacrifice form in order to push more weight.
- **Do cardio 2-7x/week and/or shoot for 10 thousand steps/day** - It is virtually impossible to do "too much" cardio. If you can't make time for steady state/HIIT in the gym, do your best to get close to 10k steps each day.
- **Progress your workouts over time** - Week to week (or month to month, at the very least), the goal is to lift more weight for more reps and/or progress to more challenging exercises. You need to challenge yourself for your body to respond and adapt!
- **Shoot for 80% consistency** - Again, perfection is not required to make progress! If you can hit the 80% mark, you'll see great results.

# The Diet

Knowing what to eat to reach your goals can be tricky. To set you up for success in 2024, here are some sample meal plans to get you started.

Three meal plans for males trying to lose fat while gaining muscle. 2100-2300 calories with 150-200g protein.

And three plans for females with the same goal. 1600-1800 calories with 120-150g protein.

### Male Meal Plans (2100-2300 Calories):

#### Meal Plan 1:

##### Breakfast:

Scrambled Eggs with Vegetables and Avocado

- 4 whole eggs
- Mixed vegetables (spinach, bell peppers, onions)
- 1/2 avocado
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 15g, Fat: 25g, Calories: 400

##### Mid-Morning Snack:

Greek Yogurt with Almonds and Berries

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- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup almonds
- 1/2 cup mixed berries
- Protein: 25g, Carbs: 20g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 350

### Lunch:

#### Grilled Chicken Salad with Quinoa

- 8 oz grilled chicken breast
- Mixed greens
- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa
- Cherry tomatoes, cucumber
- 2 tbsp olive oil dressing
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 20g, Calories: 500

### Afternoon Snack:

#### Protein Smoothie

- 1 scoop whey protein powder
- 1 cup almond milk
- 1 banana
- 1 tbsp almond butter
- Protein: 25g, Carbs: 40g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 400

### Dinner:

#### Baked Salmon with Sweet Potato and Asparagus

- 8 oz salmon fillet
- 1 medium sweet potato (baked)
- 1 cup asparagus (roasted)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 20g, Calories: 500

### Evening Snack:

#### Cottage Cheese with Pineapple

- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup pineapple chunks
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 20g, Fat: 5g, Calories: 250

#### Total for the Day:

- Protein: 190g
- Carbs: 155g
- Fat: 105g
- Calories: 2200

## Meal Plan 2:

### Breakfast:

#### Protein Pancakes with Berries

- 2 scoops protein pancake mix
- 1 cup mixed berries
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 60g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 500

### Mid-Morning Snack:

#### Cottage Cheese and Whole Grain Crackers

- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 6 whole grain crackers
- Protein: 25g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 300

### Lunch:

#### Turkey and Quinoa Bowl

- 8 oz ground turkey
- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa
- Mixed vegetables (bell peppers, onions, zucchini)
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 500

### Afternoon Snack:

#### Protein Smoothie Bowl

- 1 scoop whey protein powder
- 1 cup almond milk
- 1/2 banana
- 1/4 cup granola
- 1 tbsp almond butter
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 40g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 400

### Dinner:

#### Grilled Steak with Quinoa and Roasted Vegetables

- 8 oz sirloin steak
- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa
- Roasted vegetables (broccoli, carrots, cauliflower)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 20g, Calories: 550

### Evening Snack:

#### Protein Pudding with Almonds

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 scoop chocolate protein powder
- 1/4 cup almonds
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 15g, Fat: 20g, Calories: 400

Total for the Day:

- Protein: 205g
- Carbs: 205g
- Fat: 110g
- Calories: 2250

### Meal Plan 3:

#### Breakfast:

##### Avocado and Egg Breakfast Wrap

- 2 whole eggs (scrambled)
- 1/2 avocado (sliced)
- 1 whole wheat wrap
- Salsa for flavor
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 20g, Calories: 400

#### Mid-Morning Snack:

##### Protein Oat Bars

- 2 homemade protein oat bars
- 1 medium apple
- Protein: 25g, Carbs: 40g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 350



### Lunch:

#### Salmon and Quinoa Salad

- 8 oz grilled salmon
- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa
- Mixed greens
- Cherry tomatoes, cucumber
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinaigrette
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 20g, Calories: 500

### Afternoon Snack:

#### Greek Yogurt with Honey and Walnuts

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/4 cup walnuts
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 400

### Dinner:

#### Chicken Stir-Fry with Brown Rice

- 8 oz chicken breast (sliced)
- Mixed vegetables (bell peppers, snap peas, carrots)
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 40g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 550

### Evening Snack:

#### Protein Ice Cream

- 2 scoops protein powder
- 1 cup almond milk
- 1 tbsp almond butter
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 15g, Fat: 20g, Calories: 400

#### Total for the Day:

- Protein: 195g
- Carbs: 185g
- Fat: 95g
- Calories: 2250

## Female Meal Plans (1600-1800 Calories):

### Meal Plan I:

#### Breakfast:

#### Scrambled Egg Whites with Spinach and Feta

- 1 cup egg whites
- 1 cup spinach
- 1 oz feta cheese
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 10g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 250

### Lunch:

#### Quinoa and Black Bean Bowl

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 cup black beans (canned, drained, and rinsed)
- 1/2 cup corn kernels
- 1/2 avocado
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 75g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 500

### Snack:

#### Greek Yogurt Parfait

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup mixed berries
- 1/4 cup granola
- Protein: 25g, Carbs: 30g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 300

### Dinner:

#### Grilled Chicken Breast with Broccoli and Sweet Potato

- 8 oz grilled chicken breast
- 1 cup steamed broccoli
- 1 medium sweet potato (baked)
- Protein: 45g, Carbs: 40g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 550

Total for the Day:

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- Protein: 130g
- Carbs: 155g
- Fat: 45g
- Calories: 1600

### Meal Plan 2:

#### Breakfast:

##### Protein-Packed Smoothie Bowl

- 1 scoop protein powder
- 1 cup almond milk
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup oats
- Protein: 35g, Carbs: 60g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 450

#### Lunch:

##### Lentil and Vegetable Stir-Fry

- 1 cup cooked lentils
- Mixed vegetables (bell peppers, carrots, snap peas)
- 1 cup brown rice
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 80g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 500

### Snack:

#### Cottage Cheese with Pineapple and Almonds

- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup pineapple chunks
- 1/4 cup almonds
- Protein: 30g, Carbs: 20g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 350

### Dinner:

#### Baked Cod with Quinoa and Roasted Brussels Sprouts

- 8 oz cod fillet (baked)
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1 cup roasted Brussels sprouts
- Protein: 35g, Carbs: 40g, Fat: 10g, Calories: 500

#### Total for the Day:

- Protein: 130g
- Carbs: 200g
- Fat: 45g
- Calories: 1800

### Meal Plan 3:

#### Breakfast:

##### Oatmeal with Chia Seeds and Berries

- 1 cup cooked oats
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 1/2 cup mixed berries
- 1 tbsp almond butter
- Protein: 20g, Carbs: 50g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 400

#### Lunch:

##### Turkey and Quinoa Stuffed Bell Peppers

- 8 oz ground turkey
- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa
- 3 bell peppers (halved and baked)
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese
- Protein: 35g, Carbs: 40g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 500

#### Snack:

##### Hummus with Carrot Sticks

- 1/2 cup hummus
- 2 medium carrots (sliced)
- Protein: 15g, Carbs: 20g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 250

### Dinner:

#### Shrimp and Vegetable Stir-Fry with Brown Rice

- 8 oz shrimp
- Mixed vegetables (broccoli, bell peppers, snap peas)
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Protein: 40g, Carbs: 50g, Fat: 15g, Calories: 550

#### Total for the Day:

- Protein: 110g
- Carbs: 160g
- Fat: 60g
- Calories: 1700

## The “Why” Behind The Diet

To lose fat, you need to [maintain a calorie deficit](#). In other words, eat fewer calories than you burn day to day and week to week.

If you'd like to look more toned, it's crucial that you don't miss the most important step - **preserving muscle mass**.

Here's how to maintain (and maybe even build muscle) while losing fat:

### **Calorie Deficit:**

To shed excess fat, you need to consume fewer calories than you burn. A sustainable calorie deficit is key, as overly aggressive deficits can lead to muscle loss and hinder your progress.

### **High Protein Intake:**

[Protein is the building block of muscle](#)

. Maintain a high protein intake to support muscle growth and preservation while in a calorie deficit. Aim for around .8-1 grams of protein per pound of body weight.



### Resistance Training:

Continue your resistance training even while focusing on fat loss. This prevents muscle loss and helps maintain a toned appearance. Compound exercises, like squats and deadlifts, are particularly effective.

By combining **progressive overload for muscle building** and **sustaining a calorie deficit with high protein intake**, it will be impossible for you to *not* get more toned.

### Two important notes:

1. **These are general recommendations.** Your ideal calorie intake/diet depends on a lot of factors, including your height, weight, age, training, and daily activity levels. If you'd like a more personalized plan, [reach out to me](#) and we'll come up with a personalized plan.
2. **You do NOT need to follow this plan (or any plan) directly.** I recommend my clients move to a flexible approach as quickly as possible. What does “flexible” mean? Fitting the foods you love into your calorie and protein goal for the day. If your goal is 2100 calories and 150 grams of protein, you can eat whatever foods you want as long as you get close to those totals.

Last, you'll notice these meals are chock full of **protein and fiber**. That's because protein and fiber are your secret weapons for fat loss and longevity.

### Protein:

Protein makes fat loss easier because it:

- 1. Reduces hunger.** When you're not constantly hungry, it's easy to eat fewer calories and drop fat faster than you can say, "The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick."
- 2. Has the highest thermic effect of food.** This means that it "boosts" your metabolism by helping you burn more calories at rest. For every 100 calories of protein you eat, 30 are used for digestion.
- 3. Is the best macronutrient for building muscle and strength.** To build muscle, you need to have amino acids (the building blocks of protein) floating around in your system. Frequent consumption of protein is an anabolic I.V. drip, giving you the raw materials you need to gain and maintain muscle.
- 4. Improves recovery and reduces soreness.** A high protein diet will help you recover more quickly between workouts, improving strength and performance over time.

**Here's how much protein you need to reach your goals.**

Goal...Recommended protein intake:

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- **Build/maintain muscle while losing fat...**1-1.5 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight
- **Gain muscle and strength...** .8 - 1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight
- **Maintain a lean, strong physique....** ~1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight

### Fiber

Researchers consistently find that eating a high fiber diet is one of the best ways to reduce hunger and manage calorie intake. By keeping you full - by shutting down hunger and cravings - you'll feel satisfied eating the "right" amount of calories.

Because the only way to gain fat is by eating more calories than you burn over time, fiber's hunger-crushing power is a fat loss phenomenon. You'll be so full between meals that the thought of more food will make you want to chuck a sandwich at a wall.

If your goal is to get to a healthy body weight and maintain it over the long haul, you need to make fiber a top diet priority.

Plus, **eating enough fiber offers a ton of other benefits including:**

- Improves blood sugar control
- Lowers cholesterol
- Improves G.I. health and regularity
- Reduces risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer

If you're thinking "Who knew fiber was such a miracle? I'm sold, #teamfiber till I die. Hey John, could a high fiber diet help me live longer?"

It does! High fiber diets have consistently been shown to reduce risk of disease and death, improving lifespan.

**One study found that for every 10 grams of fiber a study participant ate, his/her risk of dying from any cause was reduced by 10%. Put another way, an extra 20g of fiber reduced risk of dying by 20%, 30g by 30%, and so on.**

Those results are mind-blowing. There is not a single nutrient other than fiber that has such a significant, health-promoting effect.

Fiber is the real deal.

### **How much fiber should you eat?**

Considering up to 95% of Americans don't eat enough fiber, you probably need to step up your game.

The average American eats just half of the **25-35 grams of fiber/day** recommended by the American Heart Association.

A better, more specific target is to shoot for 14 grams for every 1,000 calories consumed. If you're eating 2,000 calories you'd shoot for 28 grams of fiber, 3,000 calories and 42 grams of fiber, etc.

### The Diet - Key Takeaways

- **Focus on eating mostly minimally processed foods** - By centering your diet around fruits, vegetables, and minimally carbs/healthy fats, you'll have an easier time eating fewer calories and losing fat.
- **When it comes to weight loss, calories are king** - To lose weight you need to eat fewer calories than you burn.
- **Prioritize protein and fiber** - Protein is essential for muscle building and repair, and both protein and fiber are filling. They are key when it comes to feeling good while losing fat.
- **Eat mindfully and slowly** - Slowing down and "being present" when eating can improve digestion, reduce overeating, and improve meal satisfaction.
- **Pick foods you enjoy** - If you hate broccoli, don't eat it. If you hate chicken, don't eat it. Plan your meals around healthy foods you enjoy. Season your food well and use tasty, low calorie sauces/condiments. The more you enjoy your food, the more likely you'll be to stay consistent.
- **Supplements can give you a boost but aren't required** - Creatine monohydrate, protein powder, vitamin D, fish oil, and magnesium are the "highest bang for your buck." Most people would benefit from supplementing with these.

## The Mindset

If you fell short last year, you're not alone. **Nearly 80% of people give up on their New Year's goals by Valentine's day.**

Most people fail for **3 reasons**:

1. They didn't value their goal enough
2. They didn't make the process of achieving their goal fun or engaging
3. They didn't reduce the friction in the way of their goal

If you'd like to reach your fitness goals in 2024, you need to address each one. And to do that, **you need discipline.**

Likelihood of accomplishing your goal = **the strength of your discipline**

This framework comes from Steven Bartlett, a genius and the man behind Diary of a CEO. His equation for discipline:

**Discipline = Value of the goal + reward of the pursuit - the cost of the pursuit**

If we agree that accomplishing your goal comes down to the strength of your discipline, then we can simplify it to:

***Likelihood of accomplishing your goal = value of the goal + reward of the pursuit - the cost of the pursuit***

If you can nail down the value of the goal and make the process enjoyable, while limiting the downside, you're off and running.

Put another way, to reach your goal you need to:

1. Understand why it's important to you.
2. Find ways to enjoy the process
3. Reduce the associated cost of chasing the goal

Here are some thoughts to get you started.

### **I. Understand why your goal is important to you.**

Too many people spend too little time picking a goal and too much time working toward the goal. Before you go all out to solve a problem, make sure the problem is worth solving in the first place.

For example, I made a goal this past year to deadlift 455 pounds. Why? Eh, I wanted to get stronger. My answer to the question "why is this goal important" lacked meaning and depth.

It's no wonder I failed! I worked up to 425-435 pounds after a few months, my back started hurting, and I quit.

I rushed through the most important step - elaborating on why the goal was important to me - and jumped right to the tactics.

**3 steps to avoid my mistake:**

- 1. Clearly define your goal.** Make it specific and realistic.
- 2. Establish why that goal truly matters to you.** Decide why it matters to you intrinsically, not just extrinsically.
- 3. Imagine the benefits of accomplishing the goal.** Visualize how you'll feel after accomplishing the goal. Fully understanding how it will feel to succeed will help you stay the course.

If I had articulated why a 455 deadlift was actually important to me - to set a barbell strength PR for the first time in years, to prove to myself that I can do hard things, to make sure my fiancé doesn't deadlift more than me, etc. - I would have been more likely to stick with it.

**To increase your odds of success, pick a worthwhile goal and make it feel as valuable as possible.**

## **II. Make the process of achieving your goal engaging and rewarding**

Remember our equation:

***Likelihood of accomplishing your goal = value of the goal + reward of the pursuit - the cost of the pursuit***

We just built up the value of the goal. To increase the other positive variable in that equation (reward of the pursuit), make the process fun.



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Some ways to do this:

- **Enlist social support** - Create a group chat with your other fitness-minded friends and start a consistency competition. Hire a coach. Whatever it is, have someone to cheer you on and hold you accountable.
- **Gamify the process** - Approach your fitness like a video game. Strive to set new records and “level up.” My coaching clients use an app that gives them a virtual medal when they set a strength record. It sounds silly but works really well for a lot of them.
- **Stack habits** - Pair a rewarding habit with one you hate. Love binging “The Office” but hate the stationary bike? Watch while you ride. Listen to your favorite music or podcast while working out. Etc.

You get it - the more enjoyable the process, the lower your chances of giving up.

### III. Reduce friction in the way of your goal

The only negative variable in our equation is the most important. If the cost of the pursuit is too high, it doesn't matter how badly you want it or how engaging you make the process. You will fail.

*Likelihood of accomplishing your goal = value of the goal + reward of the pursuit - the cost of the pursuit*

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If value and reward of pursuit both equal 10, but cost equals 50, we're toast.

*Likelihood of accomplishing your goal =  $10 + 10 - 50 = -30$ . Game over, we lose :(*

**A strategy that is...**

- Too time consuming
- Involves too much negative feedback
- Induces fear
- Drains you of your energy
- Too isolating
- Too difficult

**...will wear down even the strongest-willed person eventually.**

Do everything possible to knock down the barriers in the way of your goal and make the process suck less.

**Some ideas to get the ball rolling:**

**1. Prep your food ahead of time and/or sign up for a meal delivery service. Make sure you actually enjoy what you're eating.**

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**2. Plan your workouts in advance and schedule them in your calendar.** Make sure they're doable, both physically and mentally, and a realistic add to your schedule

**3. Don't do anything you hate.** If you despise running or choking down raw broccoli, don't do those things. Forcing yourself to do things you don't enjoy is a fast track to burnout.

**4. Make it convenient.** Set up your environment for success with healthy food stocked and workout gear nearby. Don't sign up for a gym an hour away.

**5. Do the hardest things early in the day.** As the day goes on, your willpower and energy levels fade. Set up your tired, 7pm self for success by starting the day strong.

## Your Next Steps

I've been coaching people for 6 years. I went to school for seven years to get “Doctor” in front of my name. And I've dedicated my adult life to figuring out ways to make getting in shape suck less.

Distilled down to its essence, I help people figure out this equation.

***Likelihood of accomplishing your goal = value of the goal + reward of the pursuit - the cost of the pursuit***

It is so simple. Yet so hard. So many people are unhappy with their bodies and scared of what their health will look like in the future if they don't make a change.

It absolutely kills me, because I know how to help them. And I know how high the stakes are.

Here's what's at stake:

- **More confidence** in your social and work life
- **Higher energy levels** for your family and friends
- A future free of **preventable chronic disease like diabetes and heart disease**
- An investment in your **future function and quality of life**

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Confucious said:

**“A healthy man wants a thousand things, a sick man wants only one.”**

How would your life be different 1 year from now if you committed 2024 to improving your health? How would it help you get more out of life in the next 5, 10, and 30 years?

If you'd like to take the first step, you can fill out my 90 second coaching application below.

[VIP Fitness Coaching Application](#)

And if you're interested but have no idea what "fitness coaching" even means, you can learn all about it (and my amazing clients) here - [What Is Fitness Coaching?](#)

Thanks,

John

P.S. I can't guarantee results, but I can guarantee you won't regret making an informed decision. Plus, the game plan session is free and low stress. No risk, all upside.

You can sign up below:

[Free Game Plan Session](#)

## New Year's Kickstart

### **Additional Resources:**

My articles:

[How To Get Toned Without Fat Burners Or Endless Cardio](#)

[The 3 Form Mistakes Responsible For 95% Of Joint Pain From Lifting](#)

[Protein or Perish: How Eating Enough Protein Helps You Get Lean and Stay Strong](#)

[Top 5 Fat Loss Mistakes I've Seen From Working With 143 Clients](#)

[50 Day Plan To Get In Shape](#)

[How To Sleep Well - Transform Your Health While You Snooze](#)

[Top Twelve Keys To Building Muscle Fast](#)

Top client transformation articles:

[How Veronica Got In The Best Shape Of Her Life For Her Wedding](#)

[How Matt Lost 25 Pounds and Did His First Pull Up Since The '90s \(Without Giving Up Beer\)](#)

[How Derrick Lost 20 Pounds In Two Months \(By Working Out Less Than One Hour/Week\)](#)

Articles from others:

# New Year's Kickstart

[Overchoice and How To Avoid It](#)

[My Dead-simple Approach to Healthy Eating](#)

[How to Exercise When You're Busy or Tired](#)

[How to eat junk food: A guide for conflicted humans](#)

[Healthy Eating Ultimate Guide: Start Eating Healthy Without Being Miserable](#)

- [How to improve your gut health: 5 research-backed strategies](#)
- [Motivation is Overvalued. Environment Often Matters More.](#)

Podcasts from others:

[Dr. Andy Galpin: How to Build Strength, Muscle Size & Endurance | Huberman Lab Podcast #65](#)

[Dr. Andy Galpin: How to Assess & Improve All Aspects of Your Fitness | Huberman Lab Guest Series](#)

[The Longevity & Brain Benefits of Vigorous Exercise | Dr. Rhonda Patrick](#)

[How To Develop a Strong Aerobic System, Increasing Your Life Expectancy & More w/ Joel Jamieson](#)

[17 Raw Lessons About Human Nature - Steven Bartlett \(4K\) | Modern Wisdom 688](#)

[Ep. #1099: Dr. Kelly Starrett on Building Resilience and Longevity](#)

## New Year's Kickstart

### Books:

Clear Thinking - Shane Parish

Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity

Rebuilding Milo: A Lifter's Guide to Fixing Common Injuries and Building a Strong Foundation for Enhancing Performance

Flexible Dieting: A Science-Based, Reality-Tested Method for Achieving and Maintaining Your Optimal Physique, Performance & Health

Focus on What Matters: A Collection of Stoic Letters on Living Well

Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: The Acclaimed Guide to Stress, Stress-Related Diseases, and Coping