



THE STRATEGIC LINK™

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Sharing is Achieving, Tell Others About Your Goals

Rebecca Pratt, Sparkpeople.com .

Which is why—whether you're looking to eat healthier, increase your energy, lose a few pounds, or build up those nearly atrophied muscles—it's good to find a fitness friend, maybe even several. In fact, experts say sharing your goals with others is vital to achieving them. Electing your own personal health-related "board of directors" can give you important tools, knowledge, insight, moral support and even humor, to help you get results.

But before you run off to enlist the aid of just any Tom, Dick or Harriet, be forewarned. You should carefully consider how (or who) you appoint to your

personal shape-up board. Picking fitness buddies can be fraught with danger; implicit in the concept is the level of trust and confidence you seek. Are you just looking for a jogging buddy? Or do you want someone who (gently) holds you accountable for overeating while at the same time encourages you? Will you ruin a long-term otherwise healthy relationship by pressing your spouse, neighbor or friend into a new role that really doesn't suit them?

Consider carefully whom you choose and the role they will play:

- Don't be afraid to share your goal with



family and friends. Having those closest to you in on your plans can mean daily, invaluable support and assistance.

- Avoid naysayers. For whatever reason, some folks just have the habit of belittling or ridiculing the goals of others, whether because they feel

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Living with Allergies

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Sneezing, sniffles, runny or stuffy nose, watery and itchy eyes, headache—these symptoms are all too familiar to allergy sufferers. Seasonal allergic rhinitis, commonly called hay fever, can leave you feeling sick and desperately searching for relief. When you have an

allergy attack, your body is responding to dust, animal dander, pollen or other substances from sources such as grasses, trees, and flowers. If you are uncertain about what's causing your allergic reactions, keep a journal noting your surroundings at the time an episode occurs

to see if patterns develop.

You can run but you can't hide. It is impossible to completely avoid allergy-inducing irritants, but you can minimize exposure.

- Stay inside when the pollen count is high

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Living with Allergies

- Keep windows closed and use air-conditioning as much as possible.
- Replace air-conditioning and heating filters often.
- Use indoor air cleaning systems
- Keep humidifiers clean and free of mold.
- Think about removing carpets-they accumulate allergens 100 times more than bare floors.
- Remember, pollen settles on your pet's fur, hugging your hound might aggravate your symptoms.

Prescription and over-the-counter medications can provide relief from symptoms but both have some side effects. Always check with your physicians to see what's right for you. Read and follow all instructions and warnings.

Antihistamines: Reduce swelling, itching, sneezing, watery eyes, excessive mucus. Possible side effects: Drowsiness and dry mouth.

Decongestants: Relieve swelling. Possible side effects: Can cause nervousness or drowsiness;

can increase blood pressure in high doses.

Corticosteroids (nasal spray form): Relieve nasal congestion. Possible side effects: Can cause stinging; if improperly used, can damage nasal tissue.

Allergy shots: Decrease allergy response; usually weekly shots given over a long period of time.



Do not dwell on the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment
-Buddha

Take Action to Control High Blood Pressure

When you know that you have high blood pressure, it's important to do all you can to keep it under control. Although you may not feel the symptoms from day to day, it can take a toll on your health. The good news is that there are steps you can take to lower your high blood pressure.

Lose weight if necessary. Losing extra pounds can make a difference. For some people, weight loss may be all that's needed to lower blood pressure. For others, losing weight may reduce the amount of medication needed to manage high blood pressure. Take it one step at a time, reducing fats as well as overall calories. Talk with your doctor about strategies for losing weight and staying healthy.

Be physically active. Exercise

goes hand in hand with losing weight. However, even if your weight is on target you still need regular physical activity. In addition to lowering your blood pressure, it makes you feel and look better. Exercise also can help reduce your risk of heart attack and other health concerns. Walking is excellent exercise and offers lots of health benefits.

Choose foods low in salt and sodium. Use less salt when you cook and don't add salt at the table. This might be a hard habit to break. Try sprinkling different spices on foods to add flavor. Once you break the salt habit, you'll find foods really are tastier without it. Read nutritional labels for salt or sodium content. You may be surprised to see high levels in foods you'd never suspect as

“salty.”

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Limit your alcohol intake. If you don't drink, it's best not to start. If you drink, limit your alcohol intake to no more than one or two drinks a day. Talk with your doctor about the effect of alcohol on your blood pressure and any possible interactions with your medication.

Take your medication. If your doctor has prescribed pills, take them as directed. Don't skip them just because you don't feel any symptoms. Pay attention to how your medicine makes you feel. If you have a side effect, such as dizziness, sleepiness or some other problem, be sure to tell your doctor right away.

Goals

(Continued from page 1)

inadequate and threatened, or are simply mean.

- If someone close to you is unsupportive, either tune out the negativity or distance yourself from that person. If that person is your partner or lives in the same household, the problem is a bit more complicated. As far as possible, try to understand the motivation behind the negativity; is the person critical of your particular goal or of goals in general?
- Demonstrate encouragement of the goal your friends and family want to accomplish. Even better, come up with some common goals that you can work on together. There is strength in numbers. The simple act of one person saying no to an unwanted dessert can spark someone else to think hard if they really want it.
- Remember the old adage that to make a friend you have to be a friend. Make your fitness friendships win-win situations by making sure to give something back.
- Don't expect one fitness buddy to be all

things. Instead, enlist a diverse group of people who can share your various interests in small ways, whether swapping healthy recipes, exercising with enthusiasm, or confiding weight loss secrets. Not only will that keep you from relying too heavily on one resource, but it will expand your circle of friends and keep things fresh as well.

- Fit your weight loss needs into your life in small and varied ways: a healthy pot-luck lunch with co-workers, an evening walk with your spouse, or a brief morning chat with your online fitness buddies. You'll be helping others while you help yourself.

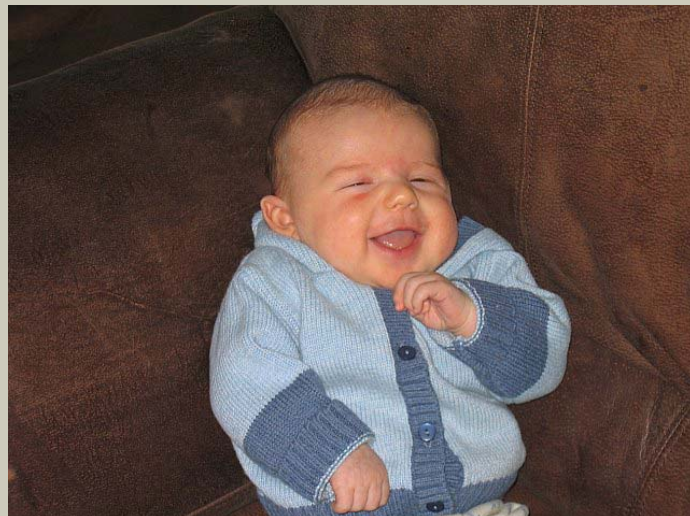
Sharing your goals with others is a powerful step towards both clarifying and fulfilling them. Not only are you more likely to follow through once you've voiced them—you're more likely to have fun along the way.



Believe that life
is worthy living
and your belief
will help create
the fact.
-William James

The B&A Buzz

We would like to welcome back to work, Jennifer Matteucci from maternity leave. Jenni and her family welcomed a beautiful baby boy into their lives. Cameron Ron Matteucci born January 13, 2008. Cameron was 7lbs. 1oz., 19 1/4 inches. Cameron joins big brother Cayden who is happy to have a little brother to play with. Welcome back Jenni and welcome to the world, Cameron.



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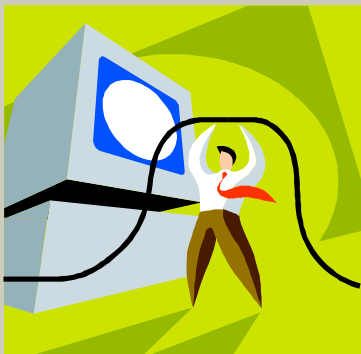
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just good business.

We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves strong. The amount of work is the same.
-Carlos Castaneda

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Keeping a Healthy Smile

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Taking good care of your teeth is important. Brushing, flossing and seeing your dentist on a regular basis can help keep your teeth healthy and strong. These tips can help:

- Brush your teeth twice a day at least for 3 minutes each time. Time yourself to make sure you are brushing long enough. Make sure to brush the teeth in the back.
- Use a soft toothbrush. Get a new one every three months.
- Use dental floss every day. Wrap the floss around two fingers. Then slide it between your teeth and scrape the sides of your teeth up and down.
- Eat healthy foods. Don't snack too much between meals. If you eat candy, brush your teeth when you finish. Don't drink soda or other drinks that have a lot of sugar.
- Never put a baby to bed with a bottle filled with milk or juice. Or any bottle at for that matter. This

can cause tooth decay.

- Visit a dentist twice a year. If you have special health problems, ask your doctor or dentist if you should go more often.
- Don't smoke or chew tobacco.

Tooth decay often doesn't hurt until it is too late to save the tooth. See your dentist right away if:

- Your gums bleed when you brush your teeth.
- Your gums have pulled away from your teeth.
- A tooth is loose.
- You have a toothache.

