

Greetings,

The last few days of January were nice with the sun shining. In one of my yoga classes, a student was saying that she felt January lasted forever. She was tired of January and ready for spring. Now that January is over, spring will be coming soon. Since our amount of rain water since September 2004 is below average, I do hope we receive more rain. It would be nice if it came at night so we could bike and walk in the sun during the day... Dreams. What is life without them!?! It looks like we will have 6 more weeks of winter, so maybe more night time rain!

I wanted to thank those who responded to the January newsletter. It was nice to hear how, what I have done, reached each of you. This newsletter will have those comments along with some tips from me on how to make your workout more successful. We will end with a list of 10 mistakes most commonly found in gyms.

First from you –

One client told me that what she needs to do to achieve habitual change is to take small steps for each change. Instead of trying to accomplish it all with one big chunk, she makes small changes first. These small changes become part of the habit and the habit changes. She said that she sticks to one small change for up to 6 weeks before bringing in any other new changes or additions. Only with this slow process can she make real changes that last.

One client was amazed at my dad. Thanks

Another mentioned that she also has done, through out her life, a lot of what I have done, similar focuses that kept her exercising. Nice.

One client mentioned how my looking back at my history made her stop and think about her life's history and what she is doing now.

Someone else told me before the January newsletter came out that being weighed and measured is what keeps her motivated. (Some of you might not know that I am doing this part only at my office now.)

The last but not least comment was very touching. This client acknowledged her appreciation to see that I too have set backs. I too am a human and am not perfect. Right on! We are all on the same road leading to the same end and it doesn't matter if you are just beginning or are the trainer. We all are only human! Thank goodness....

Thank you for sharing what you gained or learned from January's newsletter.

So now, let's review some things you have probably heard me say but it doesn't hurt to hear again. As I work with new and old clients, I continue to find myself saying these words:

Slow down – your muscles will gain the most if you do the exercises with the strength of your muscles and not the momentum of the machine or pulley or movement.

Breathe consciously – the breath is really powerful and will help you with each workout. If possible, exhale with exertion and inhale on the down stroke. If that doesn't work for you that is ok. Just consciously breathe.

Form, form, form – that goes to how you hold your body at all times, walking, standing, running... as well as to how you adjust the machines to fit you. Be conscious of your form to gain the most from each workout and prevent injury. Remember the tail bone goes down.

It's a new year, check in with yourself and see how you are doing with pace, breathing and form. Start the year on the right foot and let me know if I can help you in any way.

One client gave me a list of 10 mistakes most often seen at a gym but these are not just for gym people. These can also be found if you are working out at home. Check this out to see if you are doing any of these. It is the beginning of a new year. Think of the goals you want to achieve and see if any from this list apply to you. If so, try taking those small steps to make the change. Good luck.

The all or nothing approach. Not having a full hour to exercise is no reason to skip your workout. Research shows that even 10 minutes of exercise can provide important health benefits.

Unbalanced strength-training programs. Most people tend to focus on certain muscles, such as the abdominals or biceps because they have a greater impact on appearance or it is where they feel strongest. But to achieve a strong, balanced body, you have to train all the major muscle groups.

Bad form. The surest way to get injured in a gym is to use bad form. For example, allowing the knee to extend beyond the toes during a lunge or squat can put undue stress on the knee, and using momentum to lift heavy weights is not exercising through a full range of motion will produce less-than-optimal results.

Not progressing wisely. Exercising too much, too hard, or too often is a common mistake made by many fitness enthusiasts. Rest and gradual progression are important components of a safe and effective exercise program.

Not enough variety. Too many people find a routine or physical activity they like – and then never change it. Unchanging workouts can lead to boredom, plateaus and even injury.

Not adjusting machines to one's body size. Most exercise equipment is designed to accommodate a wide range of body types and sizes. But it's up to you to adjust each machine to your body's unique needs. Using improperly adjusted machines will lead to less-than-optimal results and increase your risk of injury.

Focusing on anything but the workout. The importance of being mindful of the task at hand cannot be overstated. Reading or watching TV can adversely affect the quality of your workout because the distraction can literally slow you down.

Not properly cooling down after the workout. Too many people wrap up their workouts and head straight to the showers. Instead, take a few minutes to lower your

heart rate and stretch your muscles. This not only improves flexibility, but also helps prepare the body for your next workout.

Poor gym etiquette. This can range from simply being rude – lingering on machines long after you are done or chatting loudly on your cell phone – to poor hygiene and not wiping your sweat from machines once you're finished. Always be considerate of others.

Not setting realistic goals. Unrealistic and vaguely stated goals are among the leading causes of exercise dropout. The key is to establish a training goal that is specific and appropriate for your fitness and skill levels – something a bit challenging but not overly difficult.

This information is courtesy of The American Council on Exercise.

In case you didn't read the January newsletter, I will mention again that I lent out a yoga book that was for people over 50. I am sorry but I can't remember who I lent it out to. If you have it, could you please let me know? thanks

Have a great February. Enjoy the sun and rain as it comes. I hope your workout is going well. If I can help, I am just an email or telephone call away.

Carol Lee