





*Dropping  
the Doha  
Dozen  
Part Two*

# *Finding YOUR Motivation*

BY CHRISTINA MARIA PASCHYN

*I've been dreading writing this article. I had thought that, by now, I would have lost nearly all of my extra pounds and been celebrating achieving my goal weight. To jog your memories, in December I embarked on an intense diet and fitness regime to drop 15 pounds; my plan was to eat no more than 1200 calories a day and exercise 3-5 times a week.*

*This was my main resolution for the New Year, and I was getting a head start. With ambition and determination burning within me, I had lost about seven pounds by the time I wrote my first instalment for GLAM.*

*On the go with hardly any time to spare? Download the free Workout Trainer app by Skimble. Offering a variety of moderate to intense 20-minute or less exercise routines, you'll be able stay in shape with just your phone in tow.*

**I**wish I could say I lost another seven pounds in the past month – hell, I'd be satisfied with just two. But the truth is the holidays really did a number on my diet and fitness plan. Most people just have to get past two main winter holidays: Christmas and New Year's Eve. If only I was so lucky. My family's Ukrainian-American background and Eastern-Catholic roots mean that, not only do we celebrate the Gregorian schedule of religious events, we follow the Julian calendar as well. That means celebrating regular Christmas, Ukrainian Christmas (Jan. 7), regular New Year's Eve and then the Ukrainian one. It's a constant stream of bubbly, food and overindulgence from Dec 25th to Jan 14th.

It's embarrassing admitting my failure on paper. But as my husband tenderly reminded me recently, most people have already given up their weight loss resolutions. According to *The Huffington Post*, that's why gyms seem to burst at the seams in January, when memberships often increase by 25%. But come mid-February, attendance peters off to typical rates and 60% of gym memberships go unused for the rest of the year.

So, it looks like I'm just like everybody else, and I'm guessing most of you reading this are just as frustrated with your failed attempt or stalled progress. So where do we go from here? Do we just throw in the towel and settle for the status quo? Or can we get ourselves back on track? Clearly, I want to do the latter, and I'm sure you do too. What's lacking in us isn't desire, it's motivation. Particularly, the motivation to push through the tough times, like when boot camp starts at 6am and the thought of crawling out of bed makes you want to cry, or when you've eaten a sensible lunch and the office-feeder waves a batch of cupcakes under your nose. All I can say is do not despair, for there is hope! In fact, there are tips, tricks and tools you can use to stay motivated and make sure you cross the finish line. Here are the ones I've now come to rely on:

**Accept that eventually you will fall off the horse. Just resolve to get back on it!**

Mistakes are natural; nobody is perfect and there will be days when that plate of grease-soaked burger and fries is too tempting to resist or you really can't be bothered to hop on the elliptical machine for an



hour. Make peace with the fact you're only human and you need a break every so often. In fact, it's healthy! Ignoring your cravings for too long can lead to binge eating. So when you do cave, relax and enjoy the experience. Just make sure you get back on track: eat a salad for dinner or workout for an extra half-hour the next morning. And remember, a single slipup isn't going to derail your plans and negate all of your hard work. A full day of overeating, however, can. That's something I still need to work on: not to shake my fist at Jillian Michaels after an abysmal workout session or binge on butter cookies after one poorly planned meal.

**Devise a Strategy**

Saying you want to lose 15 pounds is all very well, but if you don't have a specific plan and time frame in mind, it's never going to happen.

Break up your goal into baby steps, like resolving to lose two pounds per week. That way, you won't feel like you have a behemoth obstacle to overcome; you can focus on jumping one tiny hurdle at a time.

To make sure you follow your plan, put it in writing. This will reinforce your resolve and make you more accountable for meeting your weekly goals. And each time you reach an important milestone in your weight loss plan, don't forget to give yourself a little treat, like a spa day or shopping for clothes to fit your hot new physique. I like to use a colourful and peppy goal game, created by Michelle Ward of Spring: Inspiration in Bloom. It lets you break down your goal into several steps and rewards your achievements along the way. You can download it for free here: <http://springinspiration.com/michelles-goal-game-download/>

**Log on to Track Your Success!**

If your weight loss strategy includes tracking calories or logging your physical activity, you know it can be tiresome to calculate it all by hand. Let the internet do it for you! Lose It ([www.loseit.com](http://www.loseit.com)) is an ingenious tool that, based on your gender, age, current weight and height, calculates how many calories you should be consuming and expending to lose however many pounds per week. You can log your daily calorie intake; the site's extensive list of foods and respective calorie values mean you won't have to consult any nutrition books yourself. Lose It even estimates how many calories you burned during a particular workout (so no need to buy a heart rate monitor).

Another site I recommend is [www.SparkPeople.com](http://www.SparkPeople.com). Spark People provides a similar service and encourages you to engage its other users so you can build your own support community; it also provides various exercise videos.

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**Trick Yourself: Use smaller plates and larger forks**

Portion control is an essential component of any weight loss plan. It may be hard to adjust to fist-size cuts of steak from the massive slabs you typically get at restaurants. But believe me, you're not making it any easier for yourself by eating your food off an oversized plate. Invest in smaller dishes; then mentally you won't feel like you're rationing your grub.

However, the opposite is true for utensils. Researchers at the University of Utah in Salt Lake

City found that diners who used larger-than-average forks ate less. You'd think the opposite would be true. But apparently people who used a smaller fork felt they were making less progress finishing their meals, which led to more consumption of food than those who used a big fork.

#### **Stop eating after eight o'clock and hit the sack**

Over the past few weeks, I've come to realise late night snacking is the main culprit derailing my progress. I exercise everyday and eat sensibly from breakfast to dinner. But come 10 or 11pm, I'm hungry again and I start to snack. It may be healthy snacks, like nuts or fruits, but by that point at night, I've already consumed most of the daily calories I needed. I know I shouldn't eat any more, but the hunger pains lure me back into the kitchen. The solution? Get into the habit of not eating after eight o'clock. Debate remains whether late night snacking negatively affects your metabolism, but even if it doesn't, you don't really need those extra calories. So what to do if you're still hungry at night? Go to bed! Stop watching TV, which makes you want to munch, and just hit the hay. Researchers have found lack of sleep often leads to weight gain because the less sleep you get, the hungrier you feel and the more you begin to crave carbs and high-calorie sugary foods for an energy boost. Moreover, the earlier you get to bed, the earlier you wake up; researchers have also found people who rise before 9am eat less calories throughout their day than people who sleep until noon. So do yourself a favour: Turn off the remote and start counting sheep.

#### **Weigh yourself every day and give yourself a reason to lose weight**

Recent studies show people who weigh themselves everyday tend to maintain their weight and avoid additional pounds than people who just weigh themselves once a week. I know, I know. Many people disagree; they say your body experiences so much day-to-day fluid fluctuation, you'll see inaccurate losses or gains on the scale and start to feel discouraged. Yes, that's true. But what's also true is weight can pile on rapidly before you even know what hit you. That's what happened to me in the week after my wedding when I realized I had gained five pounds in just seven days. Weighing yourself every day keeps you on your toes, keeping you motivated to, at the very least, not overeat beyond the recommended calorie limit. And

as you monitor your weight on a daily basis, you'll begin to figure out how your weight is affected by certain foods or even a particularly time of the month. When I was at my lowest weight last year - 120 pounds - I decided to reward myself with a pizza and cheesy bread feast. The next day when I weighed myself, I saw I had shot up seven pounds overnight! I didn't really - the cheese and related sodium in the pizza had caused me to retain water, and my weight went back to normal after two days. But the experience was a revelation. You can bet I certainly did not eat pizza the night before my wedding!

But maybe the scale isn't enough for you; you don't care what number you see below your feet, you just want to look good. My advice: go out and buy yourself a pricey new pair of jeans, one or a couple sizes too



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small. Hang it up in a spot where you will see it every day. It will serve as a reminder to keep reaching for your goal. And when you are finally able to put on that previously too tight dress or shirt, you'll feel like you've conquered the world. It worked for me last year, and I'm hoping it works for me this year as well. It has to since I sort of blew my last paycheck on a brand new wardrobe that fits just a bit too tight for comfort. OK, so this actually wasn't my intention. When I was ordering the clothes online I thought I was purchasing a good fit. I guess I have no choice now but to lose the weight. Otherwise, I won't have any suits to wear to work!

#### **Take the time to feel beautiful**

It's easy to feel ugly after an unintended spike in weight. Many feel ashamed and want to hide from family and friends in fear of gossip and judgment. The best I can say is get over it. Locking yourself up in your apartment is not going to help you get fit, but it will give you ample opportunity to eat away your sorrows with tubs of ice cream and junk food. Realise that, regardless of how much you weigh, you are still a beautiful person and you can't let some extra pounds stop you from living and excelling in life. As you know by now, many people around the world struggle with maintaining a healthy or aesthetically pleasing (to them) figure. That doesn't mean other people don't find you just as attractive, interesting or inspiring as you were before. More importantly, confidence has the amazing ability to pull focus away from any physical imperfections.

I've done just that. A few days after the New Year, I brushed aside any apprehensions and doubts and bravely put my faith in a hair stylist who proceeded to chop off my gorgeous long blonde locks (a look I've sported since the 8th grade). And you know what? I absolutely love my haircut! I feel so much more sophisticated, yet daring and trendy, than I ever did before. And I know that my new look is going to look all the more fabulous when I reach my 'perfect size.'

When you're happy you'll find that it's easier to stay motivated in all aspects of your life, including fitness and nutrition. You'll also start each day excited about what new opportunities are in store for you. So go out and make yourself feel beautiful, whether that means splurging on a luxury pedicure or buying a sexy new dress. Imagine the confidence you'll gain when, in a few months time, you realise you need to take it in!