

SECTION EDITOR
ELLEN VAN WAGENINGEN
519-256-5533 EXT. 650

Body+Health

BEATING THE ODDS

Do certain factors boost your chances for fitness success?



BY STACEY ASKEW
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Attention resolution makers: Whether looking to slim down, butt out or bulk up, a University of Windsor professor is investigating what makes the successful succeed and the failures fail.

The ongoing project is measuring the success rate of people who have resolved to make healthy changes in their lifestyles.



Fuschia Sirois

"We all set goals. We're looking at who's following through ... and who isn't," Fuschia Sirois said.

A recent survey found only 19 per cent of Canadian adults generally achieve their New Year's resolution. Based on the results so far, Sirois said there are three things common among achievers.

Those who specifically defined their goal; writing, "going to the gym three times a week for an hour each time" were more successful than those who simply wrote "lose weight." In addition, ensuring the goal is clear and realistic is important. Finally, a buddy system, and support from family and friends are key.

At Windsor gyms staff are noticing an influx of new members.

"We do get a lot of people who decide 2008 is going to be the year they take control of themselves and get fit," said Linda Bennett, Lifestyle Family Fitness Centre general manager. "More and more people are realizing (exercising) is really a vital commitment to themselves."

While working out at the gym, Talal Al-Nawawren, 21, said he has just one resolution. "I plan to get a six pack ... I have to have one before the end of the year."



GETTING IN SHAPE: Joe Fram works out at Lifestyles Family Fitness. Activity at area gyms increases at the start of the year when people resolve to get fit.

Star photo: Tyler Brownbridge

Shana Ouellette, 24, also at the gym said she completely forgot about setting one.

"I actually for the first year didn't set a resolution. I was so busy through the holidays," she said. Last year Ouellette set one resolution — to quit smoking — and she was successful.

The next group of participants in Sirois's study will be recruited later this month.

"We'll be able to compare if setting that goal at New Year's is going to be more successful," Sirois said.

"I would like to think maybe the New Year's would work, it worked for me, but I think the date has to be really meaningful. If you don't have that notion this is a new year and a new leaf, maybe not."

Sirois decided on Jan. 1, 1990 that she would quit smoking. She built up to the day, switching to lighter and

TIME FOR A CHANGE?

Would you like to learn to dance, walk in a safe, indoor environment or better discipline your kids?

If 2008 is the year you've resolved to get your life in gear, see page B4 for a list of what the community has to offer.

lighter cigarettes over time. At the start of 1990, she made the jump.

"I just decided to quit cold turkey. I made sure the date was meaningful and I pretty much said 'This is it.'"

Ali Mokdad, working out at the YMCA, said his current resolution is also a matter of timing.

With the New Year and a recent kick-boxing defeat, his resolution is two-fold.

First goal: "To get in shape," he said. That would help him achieve the sec-

ond-win his next kick-boxing fight.

In January, sales of membership at the YMCA in Windsor are about double the average, said Marina George, membership sales and reception coordinator.

The YMCA is revamping its schedule to ensure members can attend a number of classes without waiting for long periods between them, said YMCA director Scott Holland.

At Family Fitness, while the devotion of some to fitness sometimes fade after a few weeks, Bennett said the gym strives to make them a minority.

"We try to get all new members into an assessment with a trainer, who sets up a plan and calls them six weeks later to keep them motivated," she said.

Sirois and her research team will be at Devonshire Mall Jan. 11-13, 17-19 and 24-26 to find interested participants.