

TDWC Daniel Strong = "A pursuit of excellence in body, mind, and spirit for God's glory."

We all want to be healthy, fit and happy...but it can be challenging to achieve with our hectic lives. Follow these ten steps from Daniel Plan Fitness Coach Sean Foy to help you become Daniel Strong and make a fitness plan that will work for you. Here are Sean's tips to help you start and stick with your fitness plan:

1. **You can do it!!** The first step in reaching your health and fitness goals of an active, physically fit, Daniel Strong lifestyle, is to begin by believing that you can change. Forget about yesterday - no matter what your previous experiences or attempts to change your fitness habits in the past have been...today is a new day and with God's help and strength you can do it - one day at a time!

2. **Take Fitness Baby Steps** One of the best ways to "ease" back into a regular fitness program is to "start small". Set small realistic goals allowing you the opportunity to "fit" exercise into your daily schedule-as well as increasing your confidence as you accomplish small measurable goals.

3. **Select exercises you enjoy!** get asked all the time, "What is the best exercise to help me lose weight, get in shape or improve my health? And my answer is always the same - "The best exercise to help you get fit and stay fit is THE ONE YOU WILL DO!" In other words, choose activities you enjoy - not exercises you find to be boring or drudgery. Begin with exercises or movements which bring a smile to your face. Whatever brings joy to your heart and soul, you are much more apt to continue.

4. **Get in touch with your "fitness personality"**... Ask yourself: Do I like to exercise outside, inside, on machines, with others or by myself? Do I like to do other activities when exercising such as reading, praying, worshiping, watching TV, and listening to music? Do I prefer exercising at home or at a gym? Do I like to compete when I exercise (e.g. playing a sport or training for an event)? By asking yourself these questions, you'll get a better sense of what your "fitness personality" is all about.

5. **Forgive!!** Be aware of statements that produce self-blame, shame or guilt. "Oh, there you go again missed another exercise session!!" or "You will never change!" Typically, self-blame can spiral into a demoralizing way of thinking that can sabotage even your best efforts. If you miss an exercise session or were inactive for a short period of time, which will happen, don't beat yourself up! Simply assess your lifestyle at the time and plan to get back into your new Daniel Strong active lifestyle. Maintaining an active healthy lifestyle requires patience, persistence and most importantly forgiveness.

You don't have to be perfect to be physically fit and Daniel Strong!

6. **Take Charge!!**"Responsibility can be defined as the ability to choose your response". Individuals who begin and maintain a Daniel Strong lifestyle recognize their ability and the freedom to choose their response in any situation. But remember, taking personal responsibility for your health and fitness does not imply that you have to do it alone. In fact, taking responsibility for your health and fitness should encourage you to proactively build a support team of good friends around you to encourage, assist and support you along your journey.

7. **Plan your exercise before your week begins** Good exercise habits happen because we make them happen. Take a few minutes before your week begins and plan out your week. Schedule "non-negotiable" appointments with yourself - jotting down on your phone or calendar the exact day and time you are committing to move your body. Soon enough, your regular exercise program will be something you cherish, protect and look forward to!

8. **Increase your training slowly** To help your body become Daniel Strong, slowly and incrementally begin to increase your training by 5-10% every week or every other week, based upon how you are feeling. Progression of your exercise routine is the key to getting into Daniel Strong shape. There are a number of ways to progress your workout such as:

- Changing the number of repetitions
- Increasing the duration of exercise
- Increase the speed of exercise
- Increase the number of exercises performed
- Increase the number of sets performed
- Increase the intensity of exercise-increase the elevation, RPM's revolutions per minute.
- Changing equipment or apparatus
- Decreasing your rest interval
- Change your position

- Going from bilateral to unilateral –training one arm or leg at a time vs. both at the same time
- Add a balance factor-when exercising such as using a ball, BOSU or foam roller.

9. **Track your progress** Use a small notebook or your mobile device to keep track of your exercise duration, number of exercises, sets, repetitions and weight completed. Also, make note of how you feel before during and after your activities or workouts. If you want to simplify your tracking, check off the day you completed your exercise-and give yourself a pat on the back!

10. **Fitness and Friends: Get a workout buddy who is at your level!** Getting back into shape and becoming Daniel Strong is always easier with a friend who is at a similar or higher fitness level to you. Enlist the help of friends, family members (even your dog) who you know will be consistent and faithful to exercise with you....this will help you progress together as well as encourage you and keep you accountable.

It doesn't matter where you begin – what matters is taking that first step and discovering the exercise you enjoy. Start small and make it a regular part of your life.

Just remember to take it one step at a time and win today!

God bless,
Coach Benson