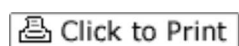


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Agassiz Observer

## A new year, a new you: Part 2

By [Jessica Murdy - Agassiz Observer](#)

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If you've set out to make a change this year, keep this in mind.

"It takes 21 days to create a habit," says Kristen Patrice, a fitness instructor at the Kent Fitness/Activity Centre.

And when the habit you want to develop has to do with health, there's a lot to get in your way.

But Patrice has some tips to help keep potential couch potatoes moving, and improving, throughout 2010 and in years to come.

"We all look to make resolutions," she says. "But we don't quite understand what it takes to make that happen."

Goal setting, motivation and accountability help. But where does they come from? At the Fitness/Activity Centre, they are offering a carrot-style incentive that inspires all three qualities in their guests.

Their Fitness Challenge encourages people to come to the gym as often as possible. Each visit, guests receive a stamp on their personal calendar.

Those who visit 21 times between January and February 28 will have completed the

challenge, by effectively creating a new habit. And in addition to healthier bodies and minds, they get a spot on the Healthy Habit Wall of Fame in the centre.

"It's all about getting in the habit of making health a part of your lifestyle," Patrice says.

From then on, the trick is maintenance. This is another tough obstacle, as many know.

But from now until April 30, centre staff will be giving out a stamp per visit. Each stamp is one credit towards exercise-related merchandise which can be purchased, such as workout towels.

Both incentives are hoped to help with motivation and accountability, Patrice says.

But the ultimate way to achieve accountability is to either grab a fitness partner or join an exercise class.

Knowing you're expected at a class at a certain time can help.

And knowing a partner is making the effort to meet you at a certain time can offer some much-needed motivation.

That way you avoid procrastinating, or working out "when you feel like it," she says.

"Bring a buddy. Bring someone you feel comfortable with," she says. "There's more accountability when they say 'I'm gonna be there at 7 p.m.' Having a buddy is just that added reinforcement."

As for fitness classes, they can open your eyes to new ways to move your body, and you can meet like-minded people.

"There's a huge social factor in that," Patrice says. "And you feed off the energy of others."

There are programs at the centre for every age and ability, and classes are designed around different abilities.

From yoga to teen fitness, to the new Nia course or Heart Health for those who've had

cardiovascular ailments, there really something for every level.

And there's no need to feel shy about joining a class, she says.

"The fitness classes are communities within themselves," she says. "The people in them adopt and welcome new people all the time. They welcome them under their wing and help them along."

Patrice also points to activities outside the Centre to improve health.

"Exercise can mean using the stairs, parking further away from where you're going, walking your dog, biking to work, raking the lawn, even housework can be exercise," she says.

"It's about making the challenge of yourself to move, to find ways to get up and be active and making little choices day to day."

She advises choosing activities you enjoy.

"Choose things you love that you're passionate about," she says. "It doesn't matter how you move, it matters that you make an effort."

And any time you're in doubt, have a question, or need some advice, always ask for help.

"I'd always say seek out a trainer," she says. It's better than wandering around a gym aimlessly, not getting the most out of your gym time, or even hurting yourself.

"They can point you in the right direction," she says.

Finally, she advises educating yourself.

"Learn about opportunities in your community," Patrice says. The District of Kent is holding an Agassiz All Inclusive Fair, January 30 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Fitness Centre, in cooperation with the BCRPA and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

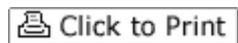
It's main focus is getting adults aged 35 to 54 active. There will be free child minding, free access to programs and community information.

"This will be a great place to start, even if you just pick one activity and say, 'oh great. I can do this.'"

For more information, phone the Centre at 604-796-8891.

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