



# ***PYT Weekly Training & Support***

## Lesson #84 How to Stick to a Program

by Jim Katsoulis

There are two really important factors when you want to stick to something, when you create a change in your behavior and you want to make it stick. You want to do something new and you want to stick with it. Now, there's always that initial enthusiasm and momentum that you may have. But how can you keep it going?

If you focus on these two factors, they can be very helpful in keeping it going.

The first one is motivation. This is why when you first start a program, when you first start some new change in your behavior, it's usually pretty easy for the first few days and few weeks; and then, it kind of fades away. A lot of it has to do with motivation. When you first begin to do something, in your mind, you're imagining all the benefits you're going to get.

You start some exercise program and you're thinking in your mind what you're going to look like. You can imagine your body being lean and strong the way you want it to be; and it's clear in your mind; and that creates the motivation to continue with the work.

But as you continue with it, what happens is, sometimes, that idea of our perfect body starts to fade away and, instead, what we start thinking about becomes us having to go through traffic to get to the gym or the painful parts of working out. And we blow that up and it decreases our motivation.

So, the first thing we want to understand is when we want to stick with something, we need to be very, very clear about why we want to do it. What are the reasons why you want to stick with this new plan?

So, if it is working out or eating better, what are the reasons? And you have to be crystal clear about them. It can't just be, "Oh, I want to get in better shape. I wanna look better. I wanna feel better." Those are too vague. We need to be very clear and articulate about exactly what it is that we're looking to accomplish here.

So, it may be that you want your arms to be toned; you want your stomach to be tight and lean; you want a more abundant energy (we get into the ends values) so that I can be more attractive to the opposite sex because I'm looking for a mate in my life, and that's part of how I wanna attract them" or "I wanna have more energy so I can play with my grandkids."

Again, you need to make it specific but we need to be very, very clear—why do you want to do this behavior?

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When you have this new plan you're going to follow, what is the reason why you want to do it? Again, we go to the first level which is maybe your body will look a certain way if you follow this plan. And then, we go to the ends values which is if my body looks that way, what will that give me?

I might be toned and lean, that's one level; the next level is, again, so that I can attract a mate or I can have more strength to pick up my kids or have more strength to pick up the groceries and carry them to the house easier.

Again, it doesn't matter. It's specific to you and what works for you. But if you're clear about this, when it becomes a month from now, two months from now and you're still following that program, you can guarantee to yourself or ensure yourself that you're still going to feel that motivation.

Now, at the same time, motivations may change a bit so sometimes you're following a plan for a month or two and maybe in two months, having those toned arms isn't as important to you. Who knows? We change as people.

That's fine. But then we need to re-address the motivation factor. So, that's the first that you want to keep in mind—motivation—and that's what makes things easy initially, that excitement; and you can control that.

The next thing is contingency planning and what I mean by this is, a lot of times, when people start a program, they have the most extreme program and they try and stick with that a hundred percent; and the day they don't do that a hundred percent, now, they fall off the wagon and it's very difficult for them to get restarted with it.

So, what you want to think about here is contingency planning and having some back-up plans. It doesn't have to just be the hour and a half of working out. You need to have workouts for when you have no energy, when you're totally kind of down or when you're not feeling great. You want to have something that you can do to keep the momentum going even if it's just that five-minute exercise, even if it's just a few simple stretches that you do. You just want to have something that keeps the momentum going forward and going into the direction you want to go in.

So often, people get in trouble because, again, it's all or nothing; and life is not all or nothing. It just isn't that way. So, you want to have contingency plans in place for times when you don't have time and something unexpected comes up.

And what I suggest is whatever it is that you're looking to do whether it's an eating plan or whether it's a workout plan, what you want to do is have an ideal plan that you're going to follow most of the time but then you also want to have things in place for unexpected circumstances, fall back plans—a workout that you can do in five minutes.

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Ideally, you have three workouts. You have your intense hour long or forty five minutes whatever workout you have, the big one. Then, you want to have kind of a middle one; and then, you want to have a real simple fast one because as we've talked before, it's a lot better if you go four days and do some intense workout; and then, the fifth day, you don't feel that great, it's a lot better to do a five-minute exercise and keep the momentum going than it is to take two days off and start to get out of sync with that whole thing, that now behavior you're trying to install in yourself.

So, if you can keep the momentum going, what it does is it keeps you on track. It may not be going on the track as quickly as you want to, but you're still on the track. And this is a real important secret to sticking with something new. It's a way to keep you going

When we first start out, we've got so much energy and motivation and we're all excited, and it can be easy to follow some extreme plan for a little while. But we need to understand it long term; you need to have alternate plans as well.

So, do that. If you have something you want to follow, if you're looking for the real secrets about how to stick to something new, the first thing is motivation—why do you want to do it? What are some of the external benefits that you're going to get?

Maybe you're going to lose weight, your stomach is going to slim down and your arms are going to look tighter or whatever it may be. Then, take it a little deeper. What are the ends values? Having that body, looking that way, having that result, what is that going to give me?

And then, when you're thinking about this plan, create a few back-up plans just in the back of your mind so when a day comes when you're not feeling great, you're not feeling a hundred percent, rather than say, “No, I can't do the hour workout today,” you have the other plans you could follow because that's going to keep you on track. And there's something magical when we create that momentum.

It's kind of a chain when we could say, “Oh, man, you know, for the last 30 days, I've exercised every single day. Everyday hasn't been an hour, but I've exercised every single day for the last 30 days or the last 60 days.”

This is how we install a new behavior. Those are two very important ways to make this new thing stick so that it becomes, ultimately, a part of our life and it becomes just part of who we are. And you don't have to worry about those things as much.

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But if you do at any point, again, you're clear on the motivation, you kind of re-fire yourself up, get yourself re-excited about it, and you have alternate plans for times when you're not in the mood and when you're not in the hundred-percent framework which is going to happen. None of us are a hundred percent motivated all the time. It just doesn't work that way.

So, what we want to do is have fall-back plans that we can utilize as well.

Do them and I'll talk to you next week.

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