

Get Psyched!

Issue #2: April 2007



Welcome to *Get Psyched!*, the Carolina Performance newsletter on a wide range of topics to help you perform better. Our group consists of psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, and consultants who are ready to help you improve your performance, in any aspect of your life. Visit us at Suite 201 in the AIHF, look at our website: www.CarolinaPerformance.net, or call **676.9699** for more information.

Change is in the Air, by Dr. Michelle Joshua

The spring season highlights the cyclical quality of the life cycle with the rebirth of nature after a cold winter. Not surprisingly, the coming of spring is often the time for people to make big changes as well. Something about the warmer weather and blooming flowers are almost magical in their ability to motivate us to “clean house” and achieve our goals.

While nature may give us the initial push to make changes, it takes self-motivation and discipline to make these changes stick. No doubt there are some of you who remember a time when you began a program of regular exercise, only to have life’s other obligations or distractions get in the way of your adhering to the routine. The good news, however, is that just like the seasons, our exercise patterns can be cyclical as well, and change throughout our lifetime.

This point was recently hit home to me when I heard a speech given by Iris June Vinegar. For her entire adult life, until the age of 53, Iris did not workout regularly. She was busy raising a

family and working at a job she despised. Her weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure were up and her mood was down. She knew she needed to make a big change in her life, so she began to run on the Greenway trail around the corner from her home.

And it wasn’t easy in the beginning. Iris said that the hardest race she ever finished was her first 10k, which is surprising for a woman who has now completed seven marathons. Even more surprising is that Iris did not begin running marathons until she was in her 70s. She is currently 80 years old and, just last year, fulfilled a dream when she ran the New York City Marathon, a nostalgic romp through the native city she left 40 years earlier. Iris’ story is so inspiring that it was chronicled in an article, “Running Home,” in the January 2007 edition of the *AARP Bulletin*.

So whether you are a young girl with the opportunity to

participate in Girls on the Run, or a middle-aged or older adult who desires better fitness, it is never too early or late to make a change for the better. Let spring be your catalyst to help move you along. Seek clarity on your motivation as you continue working towards your goals. Changes, even good ones, are hard to make stick if you forget why it is you are making the change. Constant reminders, such as notes on the fridge or support from a friend, can help you keep your focus on why you are making the effort and make your long-term vision of a different future a quicker reality.

Along the way, you will note that obstacles continue to present themselves (for example, not enough time in the day). Don’t be discouraged by these challenges. Those who are effective in making changes learn to identify their common roadblocks and are able to work with or around them. With time, patience, and a non-judgmental attitude towards the process, your new behaviors will become habits, which require few reminders, minimal mental effort, and less and less planning time.