

# Networking Fitness ©

By Donna M. Reed

When summer arrives, many of us head for the pool to enjoy lazy afternoons in the sun and swimming. However, that first view of ourselves in the mirror can be a real jolt. Our skin is pale and we have not lost that fifteen pounds we picked up over the holidays. We've been neglecting our exercise program so we are generally in pretty sad shape.

At this point, we may resolve to get in shape and attempt to do it immediately. Then we learn that some things just can't be accomplished immediately and getting in shape is definitely one of them.

There are many similarities between physical fitness and networking fitness. The principles for one often work well for the other. Let's look at these similar challenges and their solutions.

**First, we need to identify the need.** Do you need to lost weight, exercise regularly, or change your eating habits? In networking, do you need to increase your contacts in specific industries or develop better follow-up with your current contacts?

**Second, value the process and results.** If you don't value a slim body, you won't work to achieve one. If you don't value networking, you won't practice it.

**Third, set goals.** Saying, "I need to lose weight," is a judgment of yourself and gives you no specific goal to work toward. Saying, "I need to lost fifteen pounds by July 1," is specific and achievable. Your networking fitness will depend on the networking goals you set. Creating specific goals with deadlines gives you a blueprint for action.

**Fourth, locate resources.** If your goals are to lose weight, do you need a personal trainer, membership in a fitness center, on consultation with a nutritionist? You networking resources should include organizations, friends, professional associates, etc. Networking resources are everywhere but you need to identify them before you can use them.

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whether it's physical fitness  
or networking fitness.”**

**Fifth, create a system to help you achieve your goal.** A powerful system will contain several important components. Skipping lunch one day will not result of a fifteen-pound weight loss. Walking a half-mile weekly is hardly a heavy-duty exercise program. A physical fitness program will include a special diet, regular exercise, and rewards. You networking system will include events, directories, organizations, a web of personal contacts, goals and an action plan.

It takes discipline to maintain a fitness program whether it's physical fitness or networking fitness. This means you do the same things day after day over a period of time to get the results you want. Discipline will help you be consistent. Big efforts are required for big results. This

means going to the fitness center after work when you are tired and would rather go home and put your feet up in front of the television set. It means making those networking phone calls and attending networking events when the weather is bad and you would rather stay in and read a good book.

**Sixth, build in accountability.** Invite a friend to join you for a weekly hike. Ask her/him to remind you of your diet. Make sure someone is there to hold you accountable. This works in networking also. Ask someone to be your networking buddy. Share networking goals with each other. Help each other stay on track. Be there to support each other when you are discouraged and cheer when things go well.

**Seventh, give it time.** We live in an “instant society” where people expect immediate gratification. Many of us can identify with the quotation, “Lord give me patience and give it to me now!” Most worthwhile things in life take time. These include relationships, achieving big goals and perfecting skills.

It’s never too late to begin a physical fitness program or a networking fitness program. Start today to build a more productive future. By really working at physical fitness and networking fitness, we can look good at the pool as well as in the networking arena.

(Donna Reed is a very poor physical fitness coach but she is an excellent networking coach.)

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