



## FITNESS FORUM

### “I used to be an athlete”

A few weeks ago, some friends of ours decided to have a get together with all of our kids. It was a rare occasion given that someone's child is often sick and not able to make the gatherings. After the customary kisses on the cheek and ooh's and aah's over each others kids, we settled into our normal patterns. The men and women formed groups and separated much like we used to at our 8th grade dances. The women had the babies while we attempted to coral the toddlers.

As the children began horsing around and chasing each other to and fro, the conversation developed into one where each dad sang the praises of their child's athletic abilities. Specific talents included: exceptional hand eye coordination, atypical speed and natural instincts on the field. It was truly amazing how many athletically gifted three year olds we had in our presence!

It also became clear that virtually none of the parents in the room were actively engaged in any sort of regular exercise program, activity or hobby. Loose and non-incriminating clothing was definitely the fashion du jour. As one parent put it when the topic of fitness came up, “Being a dad makes you fat!”

After the party, I went home and thought to myself why is it that so many parents are content living vicariously through their children? If you asked them what activities their children were into you'd most likely be assaulted with an around the clock sports schedule including soccer, karate, baseball, gymnastics and hockey. Couple that with travel programs and it's amazing that they have time to be kids at all!

However, when probed about their own fitness activities you're more likely to hear "I used to be an athlete in college, I just don't have the time right now." Depending on the conversation and their sense of desperation they might even start to recall their high school days!

As we ring in this New Year, I encourage everyone, especially parents to find their inner athlete once again. Dust off your old running sneakers, pump up your basketballs or lace up your old soccer cleats and go for a run or a game of pick up at a local park.

Here are some tips to get started:

1. Set a goal for yourself. It can be anything from walking a mile everyday to completing your first 5k or even marathon.
2. Make it concrete. Write it down and also program it into your calendar with periodic reminders to keep you on track.
3. Invest in your activity. Although those hot pink leg warmers might still fit, athletic technology has changed to maximize function and fashion. Look into fabrics that incorporate micro fibers that wick away sweat and footwear specific for your sport.
4. Consider enlisting help. Sometimes strength really can be found in numbers. Talk to a spouse or friend to see if they are interested in joining you. Chances are they will and you can get fit together
5. No excuses. Obviously life happens. There are going to be obstacles that keep you from easily achieving your goals. The key is how you deal with those obstacles. Don't be so quick to let yourself off the hook. If you miss a workout or blow your diet don't give up. Know this: at one time or another, these things happened to all of those who have succeeded; the only difference is whether or not you will refocus and keep trying like they did.

Good luck athlete. I'll see you at the finish line!

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