

MASTERING MENTAL SKILLS HELPS ACHIEVE LONG-LASTING PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM

CHAGRIN FALLS, Ohio – January 2013 – The key to eating better and working out on a regular basis is to master one important component – commitment to success.

“People really underestimate how hard it is to change behaviors,” said Dr. Tom Raedeke, a Certified Consultant with the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) and professor at East Carolina University. “Their habits and lifestyles have been formed for a long period of time and it is incredibly difficult to change. People need to make a firm decision that they want to succeed. They need to be confident.”

Dr. Raedeke said taking small steps can go a long way. “I tell people, even if you don’t feel like working out, drive to the gym and back home,” he explained. “Or at least put on your workout clothes. Once you make the behavioral investment, a lot of times you’ll end up following through with your workout.”

Problems that interfere with success range from being overzealous and trying to do too much at once to an underlying ambivalence about becoming an active person. Dr. Raedeke said the best way to trouble shoot those problems is to establish goals.

“I don’t believe in goal setting, I believe in goal *planning*,” Dr. Raedeke explained. “For example, what days will you exercise? What times? What exercises will you do? Those with more detailed plans are much more likely to succeed.”

Dr. Michele Kerulis, a Certified Consultant with AASP, concurs, and said confidence in a person’s ability to follow through with a new active lifestyle is a must. Kerulis, a program director at the Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, offers tips for starting and maintaining an active lifestyle:

- **Commit to exercise:** Write exercise into your calendar and make a genuine effort to keep exercise appointments.
- **Establish goals:** Set challenging, yet realistic goals for exercise For example, I will register for and run in a 5K race in the next six months. Reward yourself when you complete a goal.
- **Join a group:** Socializing with people who have similar goals can help increase an exerciser’s motivation, such as participating in fitness classes or working with a personal trainer.
- **Set yourself up for success:** Eat healthy meals, drink water and get plenty of rest. This will help restore your body after exercise and prepare it for the next session.
- **Record your exercise:** Keep a record of your goals and actual exercise activity. It can help you reevaluate goals in the future.

“It is important to acknowledge that it takes time and commitment to see the results of a new exercise routine,” explained Dr. Kerulis. “It doesn’t happen overnight.”

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes ethical practice, science and advocacy in the field of sport and exercise psychology. Founded in 1986, AASP is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals in the field of sport and exercise psychology. With more than 1,600 members in 39 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its website, www.appliedsportpsych.org.