

Beauty - Health - Fitness

Getting in shape takes time

It's January 2nd and Mr. "I-Need-to-Lose-Weight" (Mr. I) has resolved to lose weight and get into shape. He heads to the local gym (the membership is a Christmas gift from Mrs. I), determined not only to burn off that extra ten pounds he gained during the holiday season, but to get into the best shape of his life.

He is adamant, drastically reducing his calorie intake, working out four hours a day, seven days a week. He feels great after the first week, his pants are looser, and he feels stronger and healthier than ever before.

When the going gets tough...

The second week is a little different, though. The hunger pains start setting in and muscles he never thought he had are giving him pain he never thought existed! But he remains determined. He still makes it to the gym every day and sticks to his diet.

The third week, "drop out" sets in. "Mr. I" begins to realize that he doesn't have the time — or the energy — to devote every free moment to exercise. So he heads to the gym only occasionally that week. The idea of eating another carrot makes him sick, and he keeps having recurring dreams of junk food. "Mr. I" starts feeling deprived, and eventually breaks his diet by eating double chocolate cheesecake a la mode.

Another week goes by and most of his old habits are back. The rationalization phase starts. "Mr. I" says things like, "Exercise and diets are for weirdos." "If we were meant to be thin, God wouldn't have invented potato chips!" and "I'll try to start my diet again next week."

"Mr. I" trades in his carrots, celery and rice cakes for chocolate, ice cream and cookies. He makes every excuse not to exercise, and resumes his role as "couch potato". By the fifth week he's gained back every pound he lost and even put on a few additional ones too.

Similar scenarios happen to millions of people year after year. But they can be avoided. The old phrase "slow and steady wins the race" is one "Mr. I" should have subscribed to.

A diet and exercise regimen should be something that is eased into, not jumped into. For someone like "Mr. I", who led a sedentary lifestyle, an intense exercise program is a real shock to the body. Not only did "Mr. I" set himself up for failure, but he could have harmed himself as well (pulled muscles and ripped tendons, just to name a few possibilities.)

Ideally, Mr. I should have started out with a minimal exercise program and gradually increased the time and intensity as his body got used to the new activity.

Taking the right approach

"Mr. I's approach to dieting was another mistake. By drastically reducing his intake of calories, he "tricked" his body into "thinking" that it was starving. As a result, his body built up extra fat cells, his metabolism slowed and, in the end, he ended up gaining weight.

Healthy eating habits and exercise shouldn't be thought of as a temporary way to get into shape, but as a way to live a healthy life. Hopefully, someday, "Mr. I" will come to understand this concept, but until then, his scale will be having a lot of ups and downs!

Stouffville Fitness Resort Inc.

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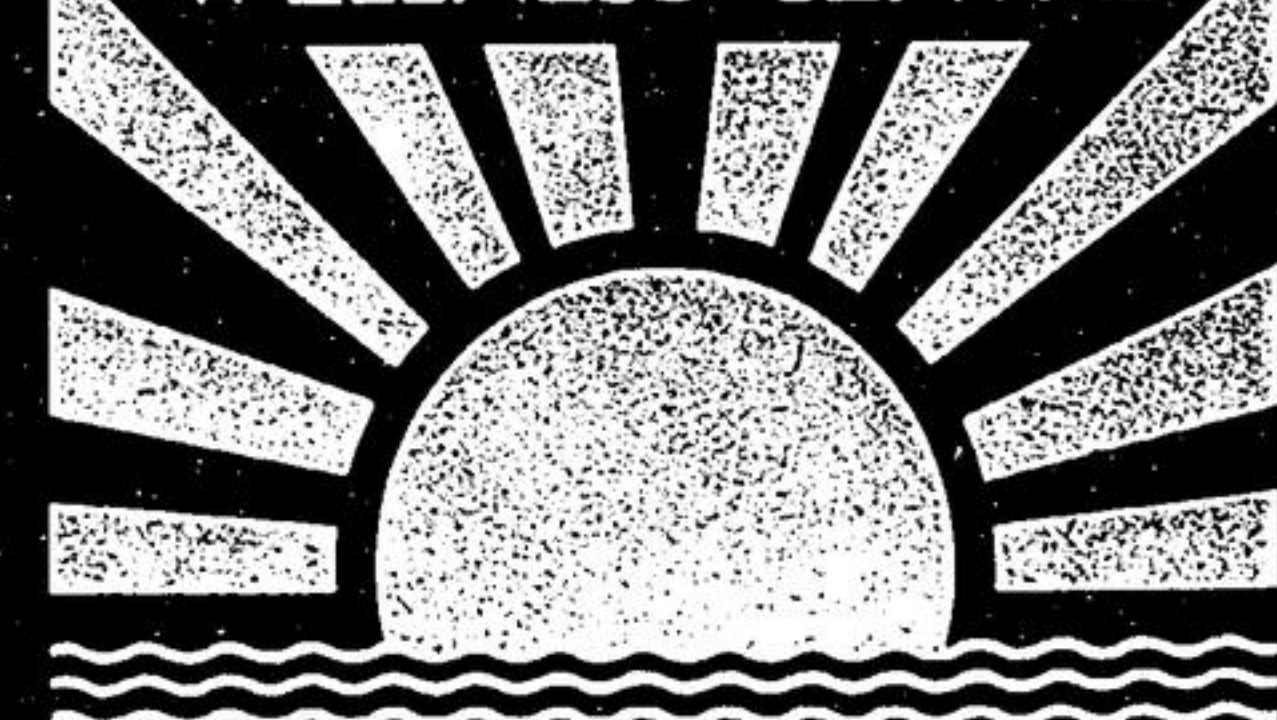
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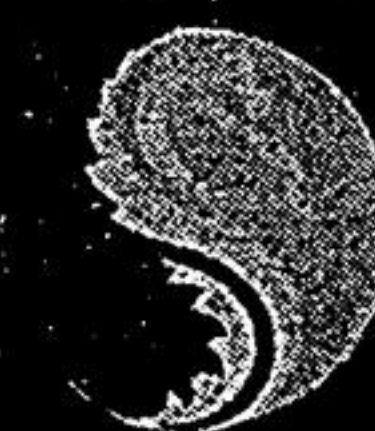
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