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G-R-A-D-U-A-L spells “ME”

Friday, May 28, 2021



I admire those who can go “cold turkey” – no sugar, no caffeine, no TV etc.
While I want to improve in all areas, I just was never very good at all or nothing.
I do not do well if I feel deprived.

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For 60 years I've started my day with coffee. Strangely I am never hungry when I wake up but I do want coffee. For 53 years DH has it waiting for me. It is my only caffeine all day.

I used to pour a heaping teaspoon of sugar into it. Maybe more.

Could I give up sugar and drink it black? Nope, not me.

I created my own “step down” method using measuring spoons. Gradually I reduced the amount by tiny bits. It took nearly a month to get down to that ½ teaspoon (2nd from the left). Such a slow reduction I hardly noticed the difference. From ½ to ¼ to 1/8 to NONE! The silver spoon is to stir in the splash of milk I still add.

Gradualism experiment #2

I eat a lot of yogurt, but could never adjust to the “plain” variety. French Vanilla was my flavor of choice. Even with adding fruit, I could not eat the plain stuff. So I began mixing the two. One tablespoon of plain to five of French vanilla. Eventually the ratio was reversed. Then I discovered Greek yogurt. Lots more protein and less sugar. Played with the ratios and again success! Much better nutrition and no deprivation.

Gradualism always worked for me with exercise so I shouldn't have been surprised about the food. When I decided to run, I started with 30 SECOND intervals followed by 4:30 walking and repeated for 30 total minutes. Adding 15 SECONDS to the running interval each WEEK and reducing the walk accordingly, it took me 6 months to run a 5K. That's way slower than any couch to 5K program I've ever seen. Still, I never got injured, or quit and I'm still “in the race” 34 years later (virtually anyway). Covid

really messed that up.

How about Weight Loss?

It took me 11 months to get rid of the 25 extra pounds I carried for 25 years. No speed awards there, but it gave my body time to adjust and after 11 years of maintenance, my joints are very happy not to have to drag those extra pounds around.

Note: If I hadn't stopped drinking soda in 1992 I would have had even more weight to lose. 25 pounds may not sound like a lot, but it represented 16% of my body weight and I was already very active.

Strength Training? That's my least favorite exercise

When I began doing that, I posted 5 minutes of hand weights. That got a negative reaction from a person who told me quite strongly that my effort was "useless." If I didn't have experience with gradualism, I might have been discouraged. I knew that I could and would improve if I just approached it gradually. And I did. Of course, I have to keep my dumbbells in plain sight right in front of the TV to remind myself to do it.

My DD gave me that set as a gift. They range from 2 to 15 pounds.

Gradualism has its limits though. I use the 15 pounder as a doorstop in the basement

Edit: This blog was prompted by my goal to return to swimming again. Something I haven't done in over a year. Start SLOWLY, GRADUALLY add distance and hopefully return to form.

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SABLENESS

The key is recognizing what works for you, not the critics. There's not one right way and one wrong way. I'm with you on gradualism; good word!

1 day ago



NANCYPAULINE



again has been wonderful for me after a Covid year of no pools. Good luck.

3 days ago



BJAEGER307



I think that gradualism is the way to go. I really started exercising on my stationary bike back in December of last year. I started out with 10 minutes to keep up with the 10 minute exercise routine a day for a Spark Challenge. Each week I've added a minute to each session. Now I'm up to 37 minutes and have up the intensity by a level every other month. I started out a 1 now up to 4.

I want to keep going until I reach an hour of cardio. I'll get there, just wait and see.

3 days ago



DEE797

Thanks for sharing your Gradual ways with us. I need to do the same with some of my unhealthy habits.

4 days ago



MARYONAMISSION

Love everything about this. I am definitely borrowing Gradualism from you & putting it into affect immediately. Thank you for the inspiration.

5 days ago



COUNTRYGALINNY

Good advice on the Gradualism. I have done this for some things. I buy the unflavored, unsweetened yogurt and add my own fruit/flavoring/sweetener. I do find when I go back to the flavored yogurt it is too sweet. I have gradually got to the point where I (mostly) drink black coffee. Baby steps will get you there!

6 days ago





BEAR0011

I tried to quit Diet Coke cold turkey many times - the only time I was successful was when I was pregnant and then after he was born back again. I finally managed it but only because I was sick and the taste of it was nauseating and I still can't stand the taste of it.

I love the gradual idea... I might try that with Tim as he still likes everything sweet whereas I can do Greek Yogurt and unsweetened tea and the like
6 days ago



SIMPLY_JAE

I needed this today...I need to make some changes in different areas of my life...and this was encouraging to read...I can do this just not all at once.
6 days ago



SHANDAMN

This blog was exactly what I needed to see. Thank you!
6 days ago



AGATHA54

Very Inspirational.
6 days ago



TKLBRIDGET1

Loved your blog. In this world many people are in a hurry to lose weight, look better or just get there wherever "there" is. I'm more of the turtle type slow and steady wins the race.



6 days ago



SHAKERATTLEROLL



Thank you for sharing this for this is how I have been trying to do it myself so thank you to know someone else does it this way also
6 days ago



JUSTJ2014

Love gradualism. It works for those that are disciplined.



6 days ago



YELLOW09RED

Hi Eileen,
Woohoo for you doing your coffee and yogurt. I love your title G-R-A-D-U-A-L



Your blog is awesome to read.

Hugs for you n Joe.

Debbie



6 days ago



UPTOIT59

Great ideas here!
6 days ago



GRAMPIAN

You have a great plan.
7 days ago



NORTHERNFIRE

This is so encouraging. Thanks!
7 days ago





MARGE116



Yes! Love this!
7 days ago



RACHNACH



7 days ago



GETULLY



Good on Ya! How to you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. This works for all things as you have amply shown!
7 days ago



JANBROS



7 days ago



LINDA!



You have made some very good points. I cannot go cold turkey either. But going gradually would be much easier.
7 days ago



ILLUSTRIOUSBEE



I'm the same way. I have never been successful quitting anything cold turkey. When I finally succeeded at quitting nail biting I did it by first promising not to bite one hand. After a few weeks of that I committed to only biting my thumb and index finger, then to just my thumb, and then finally, several months later I broke the habit. It's time consuming but for me, it's the only thing that works. "They" do always say that you should stick to small, achievable goals and work up to your big goal, so I guess "they" know what they're talking about. There's absolutely no shame in going one step at a time.
7 days ago



PATSGIRLY



Gradual. Another key word to a healthy lifestyle. Thank you.
7 days ago



JIMMOORE14



Your fortitude is an example to all of us. Whatever works for you is the best approach. I remember the coffee changes I made 20 years ago. I seem to remember going to black in one step and I really don't miss the extras. Running?... now that's a different proposition. I'd like to run, but not sure these knees will survive. For now I'll stick to walking for longer times. Remember it is not how fast you covered the distance, it's how far you go. So forget time and increase your distance.
7 days ago



CHERYLSCOTT54



You would be surprise what you can give up if you truly wanted to. I gave up a lot of foods I truly enjoyed; that include soda. I don't miss them; not to mention I gave up meat; starches and home made desserts.
7 days ago



TOMATOCAFEGAL



Gradual..... that worked for me with cola to diet cola. From lemon or lime in my water, from dressings to oil based spices and flavorings on my salads.
7 days ago



SAPHRAEL



Yay! You revealed a secret sauce! Making incremental change so small that you barely notice it. Love it!!
7 days ago



THINCPL2004



I have always preach that slow and easy always wins the race. Back years ago when I quit smoking, I took it slow and now I have been smoke free for over 9yrs now. Took that route when I started road biking again. First only 5miles, then 10 miles, 20 miles and so on. Now I do 100 miles

at a drop of a hat with no problems. Great blog, have a great and safe Spark weekend.
7 days ago



KITTYHAWK1949



Sometimes comments even those who are trying to be helpful aren't. I was doing a very few wall push-ups and stopped when told I should take rest days. Maybe after I got more comfortable



doing several I could have keep going only a few days a week but to begin, I needed to do them every day or would (and did) quit.



7 days ago



IMNOTSTOPPIN

Gradualism, love the word and BRAVO to you! I'm part of the gradualism movement!

7 days ago



BONIFIANT



Well done.

7 days ago



AZMOMXTWO

I agree with you that for some of us gradual is the way to do it for others way to go do it cold turkey not me I am a gradual person

7 days ago



MARITIMER3

Love your blog. Thanks for the thoughtful advice.

7 days ago



INCH_BY_INCH



7 days ago



4EVERDIETER

Great idea for me to try with strength training. I just can't seem to make myself do it.

7 days ago



SPEDED2

Congratulations on the Gradualism concept. It's what works for you that counts.

7 days ago



ROCKMAN6797

Slow and steady is the way to go, it is all about changing habits so that they become an action that is taken without a second thought. This has worked for me as I celebrate 12 years of the new ME!

Great job and keep moving!

7 days ago



DONNALEE-53



7 days ago



CHERYLHURT

Excellent advice.

8 days ago



SUNNYBEACHGIRL

I never thought of using that approach to strength training but I am going to use it. I am back in the pool and I start slow in small increments to get my endurance back.

8 days ago



PLCHAPPELL

Go9d plan

8 days ago



CINDIU

Thank you! I usually am that all or nothing girl, do great for a few weeks and then fall of the wagon completely, get run over by it and then dragged for five miles. I need to train my brain to get used to the concept of gradualism. I know it makes sense, but perfectionistic tendencies have a habit of getting in my way. Thank you for the inspiration!

8 days ago





ETHELMERZ

Good idea, do as you see fit. Do what works for you.
8 days ago



WALKINTOFIT

i want to cut down on the sugar in my coffee... its my vice.... i am going to try your method... i grew up not drinking coffee... then I got married and hubby drank the stuff... i added sugar and cream to drink it. i did cut the cream but not the sugar... i really don't need those calories any more. thanks for the great idea!
8 days ago



RHOOK20047

I do that myself when I have to break a habit. The only thing I did cold turkey was quitting smoking. I tried to gradually quit smoking, but there was always that emotional moment that would make me go back to them On my 45th birthday, I finally said that I was lighting up for the last time. I kept the open pack, which after a week or so, started smelling and a full pack on my chest of drawers as my trophy of success. 27 years later, it was a decision I haven't regretted, but once. About a year and a half, I waw with a bunch of guys playing poke, drinking beer and everyone was smoking, and I tried and choked on it, and wondered why I ever did it for 30 years previously.
8 days ago



LIS193

Well Said!

8 days ago



CATLOVER110

Baby steps! I agree that gradualism is the way to go. Thanks for sharing your experiences.
8 days ago



NANHBH

Great blog! Makes so much sense.

Well Said!

8 days ago



MARYJEANSL

Great ideas! (I did, however, get a big chuckle at the thought of the 15-pound doorstop!)
8 days ago



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