

Going for Your Goal

Nicole's keys to success: time, dedication and support

IT'S DIFFICULT TO go a day without hearing about the new "quick fix." Whether it's your career, education, family, finances or health, everyone wants to succeed...now! Unfortunately the quick fix is often a myth, but I know a secret that'll help you get where you want to be: You need to set a goal.

At the beginning of my

fitness career, my goal was to compete in a small, local show. My husband (boy-friend at the time) helped me prepare using the nutrition knowledge he had gleaned from his bodybuilding career, my best friend helped choreograph my routine in her backyard with music that another friend had burned off his computer, and my costume came from a dance studio and was

based on a picture I saw in a magazine. Although I had researched the required poses and skills for my routine, I didn't have a coach, so I had to learn everything on my own.

My friends and family thought I was nuts, but after seeing the athletes compete at the Fitness International in 2002, I knew in my heart I could do it and that nothing was going to stop me. I'm sure my parents were concerned that I was eating too much protein or losing too much weight, but when they saw the joy on my face as I took first place in that first contest (I was the only competitor in my class!), they realized it wasn't going to be my last show and that I needed their support.

I knew this was exactly the challenge I was look-

ing for. I may not have done everything perfectly, but the challenge of competing, the rush of adrenaline from being onstage and the excitement of accomplishing something I set my mind to are the reasons I still compete. I take each show as a learning experience and continue to set goals. In my heart I believe it's why I won the 2009 Figure Olympia.

Of course, not everyone wants to compete in a figure or fitness contest. Whatever your goal is, your success depends on your commitment. Personal goals and achievements should be based on what you want out of life, your capabilities, and the time and money you're willing to invest.

What's your desire? What's your dream? What's your goal?

NICOLE'S GOAL-SETTING TIPS

1 / Write it down. Goals must be specific, measurable and attainable. Instead of saying, "I want to lose weight," write it down as "I want to lose 10 pounds by Oct. 1, 2010." This forces you to be accountable.

2 / Break a big goal into mini goals. Over time, these mini goals will become part of your life. Once you achieve the first one, incorporate the second one, then the third and so on. Don't try to complete them all at once. Most likely you'll get overwhelmed and will have trouble reaching any.

3 / Believe in yourself and stay committed. Don't let others persuade you otherwise. There's a saying that nothing worthwhile is ever easy. While that may not always be true, it certainly applies when it comes to changing your physique, or your life, for the better.

4 / If you fall off the wagon, don't give up! Take a step back. Regroup, and re-evaluate your goals and level of commitment. Stay positive, be persistent and consistent, and good things will start to happen.



What started as a goal to compete on a small stage ultimately led to victory on figure's biggest stage



ASK NICOLE

Q: What's the difference between circuit training, giant sets, drop sets and supersets? It can all get overwhelming!
— Rosa, Denver

A: All the gym lingo can definitely get confusing! The key is to mix things up so you consistently see changes in your physique and your workouts don't get monotonous.

● **Circuit training** traditionally combines 6–10 exercises (strength and aerobic moves) and hits the whole body in a single session. It's an excellent way to improve mobility, stamina and strength. Your rest between exercises is very short, with a longer rest between each circuit. Usually the circuit is repeated 2–4 times.

● **Giant sets** are four or more exercises for one particular bodypart performed successively with little to no rest in between.

● **Drop sets** entail doing a set to failure, then choosing a lighter weight and immediately performing another set to failure. You can "drop" the weight once, twice or move down the rack multiple times to failure if desired.

● **Supersets** are 2–3 exercises performed back to back with minimal rest in between. Once you complete one set of each exercise, rest for a minute or two before repeating.

● **If you're still confused,** I recommend hiring a trainer who can show you how to perform the different techniques and ensure you're using proper form. Good luck!

Got a question for Nicole?

Log on to her Ask Nicole thread on the boards at muscleandfitnesshers.com or visit nicolewilkins.com and ask away!

EATING ON THE GO

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QUICK, HEALTHY SNACKS



ALMONDS

> A great source of monounsaturated fat and vitamin E.



RICE CAKES (LUNDBERG FARMS)

> Low in calories and very versatile.



TUNA IN A POUCH (STARKIST)

> No draining necessary; just open and eat! A quick source of protein.



BANANA

> Great source of potassium and vitamin B₆. Aids muscle recovery.



WHEY PROTEIN SHAKE

> Premade or powder. Mix in a water bottle or drink from the can. Ideal pre- and postworkout.

TRAINING TIP



Run Down

● When's the last time you replaced your running shoes? If you're experiencing back, hip or shin pain when exercising, it may be due to your shoes. It's a good idea to replace them every six months or after 300–500 miles, whichever comes first. These are my favorite.

Transformation Time!

● If you want to drop bodyfat and build lean muscle but need some guidance, check out our "Transform Yourself!" contest. This program provides a step-by-step workout and nutrition regimen created by me and nutritionist/trainer Kim Oddo to help give you that shape you're looking for. Even better, you could appear in a MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS training article with me! Check out the details at muscleandfitnesshers.com.

