

# Make fitness resolutions stick this year

By Michael Clark

Merriam Webster's dictionary defines *attrition* as a reduction in numbers usually as a result of resignation. Attrition, usually expressed as a percent, is used in research to show how many participants did not complete a study. It's used in business to provide "leeway" to contracts. In the health and fitness business, attrition concerns those who start an exercise program and then quit, regardless of reason. Right now the attrition rate in fitness is about 50 percent. That's right; only 50 percent of those who begin an exercise program make it stick. But why? We know exercise is a good thing. It aids in weight loss, promotes health, improves mood and self esteem. It's also a top priority come New Year's. So it's obvious, everyone wants to be more active.

As someone who has administered thousands of fitness tests and prescribed even more exercises, I can assure you that a person's physical abilities do not predict who will be successful in adopting an exercise program. I have seen some able bodied individuals make it only a week, and some unable bodies make it stick. So it's obvious that motivation is the key



**As we head into the new year, what motivates you to keep running toward your goal?**

component in adopting an exercise program. Therefore the question becomes, what motivates the people who are always exercising? Luckily, a little research has gone into this question.

One study examined the motives of over 800 exercisers, some of whom had just started an exercise program and others who had made it a permanent fixture in their daily lives. Out of the 800 exercisers, one group of 375 individuals had been exercising an

average of 13 years. This group, dubbed the "Terminator Group," was the focus of the study. All exercisers were asked to select their biggest motivators for staying active via a standardized questionnaire. They could select from a multitude of reasons, some of which were: weight control, health and fitness, appearance, enjoyment, feelings of wellness, and many other less obvious reasons.

Of all the motives to keep moving, the terminator group selected health

and fitness as their biggest motivator at a 15 to 1, yes to no ratio. Feelings of wellness were the second biggest motivator at an 8 to 1, yes to no ratio. Interestingly, weight management and appearance were among the least significant at a 2 to 1, yes to no ratio. More importantly, the researchers learned that the terminator group viewed exercise as a top priority. Viewing exercise in this manner lends itself to a "hard work" ethic; in turn making the classic barriers to exercise, like "lack of time" or "I have no energy," irrelevant.

In summary, we know that half of those who start an exercise program will succeed. Remember, if the terminator group has taught us anything, it's that superficial motivations, like losing a few pounds or looking better, may not be the best goals for maintaining an active lifestyle. So this year examine the health benefits associated with exercise and always ... always remember that hard work leads to success.

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## LOCAVORE

continued from page 1.

Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, where consumers pay in advance for fresh farm food.

When I moved to the edge of Pittsboro in 1984, our neighbor Clifton Headen asked if he could farm a piece of our land. He raised sweet corn, black-eyed peas, tomatoes and beans until he died in his late 90s, always giving us more than we needed.

Despite this cornucopia, you couldn't find a local tomato in the Piggly Wiggly then, even at the height of the growing season. And you had to drive a long way for whole grain bread, decent cheese and a legal cocktail. Most of the food growing commercially in Chatham was shipped out for sale elsewhere, while our supermarket shelves were stocked with food from California. Only a handful of markets, grocery outlets or restaurants sold fresh local food.

Today, a network of farmers, chefs, activists and entrepreneurs has made sustainable food a sustainable business, and put the greater Triangle area on the map as a model.

Though many traditional farms have gone out of business (thanks to USDA's "get big or get out" policies), small-scale sustainable farms have spread like Kudzu here as conscientious consumers seek out local organic food.

More than 250 small intensive farms in the greater Triangle region now serve about 30 farmer's markets, and at least two dozen CSA's, nearly half of them in Chatham County. Local farmers are especially fortunate to have Debbie Roos, the county's ubiquitous sustainable agricultural agent, one of a kind in this state.

The largest sustainable farm tour in the country is based here in the Piedmont, sponsored by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association in Pittsboro. Last year the tour broke all attendance records.



CFSA recently named Doug Jones its Farmer of the Year. His CSA is located at Piedmont Biofuels' famous eco-industrial complex in Pittsboro, where innovative food and energy projects feed each other.

Doug taught at Central Carolina Community College's sustainable agriculture program, the first of its kind anywhere. The CCCC program, directed by Robin Kohanowich, has been training a new generation of farmers and foodies from all over since the first class was taught in the mid 1990s by Bear Creek permaculture specialist Harvey Harman. CCCC will soon open a natural foods culinary training institute as well.

Pittsboro is also home to two other national players: RAFI, the Rural Advancement Foundation International, advocating for small farms, and the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, for rare farm animals.

In 2008, Bon Appetit discovered our secret, naming the tasty side of the Triangle the "foodiest small town" in America: "a place where foodies not only have a favorite chef, but also a favorite farmer ... where a sustainable future is foreseeable."

Local food is not only good for our environment and taste buds. It's good for the local economy, according to a new report by Michael Schuman, author of *The Small Mart Revolution*. His case studies of 24 "community food enterprises" worldwide highlighted the economic impact of Weaver Street Market.

The Carrboro based cooperative, founded in 1988, now has 12,000 members, \$20 million in annual sales, three groceries, an artisanal bakery and a restaurant, and it supports a local radio station, an affordable housing cooperative and a community fund.

Weaver Street also influenced the establishment of Chatham Marketplace more than three years ago, which has since inspired the development of the Saxapahaw General Store and a forthcoming cooperative grocery in Burlington.

Our local food shed is still evolving of course. Our region has a healthy mass of farmers, markets, restaurants, cooperatives and policy advocates — and innovative college programs. But we need more farms to keep up with the demand, and we need to make sustainable food accessible to a broader community. We also need to help traditional farmers transition to sustainable practices, and we need more incubators so new farmers can get started.

By nourishing every aspect of our local food system, we will ensure our real-food revolution will grow. Together we can keep showing the rest of the country how it's done.

*Dee Reid writes about the Triangle's food shed on her blog, SustainableGrub.wordpress.com, including links to local and national resources. You are welcome to comment.*

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