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THE SIMPLE SEVEN
FITNESS TIPS FOR 2004

San Diego – Exercise is good for you and its benefits range from preventing illness to reducing weight to making you feel better about yourself. Most people understand this and it seems that almost everyone has some sort of New Year's resolution related to fitness. Jay Blahnik, *IDEA Health & Fitness Association's Inspire the World to Fitness™* spokesperson, offers these suggestions for starting and sticking with an effective health and fitness plan.

1. Start Small! One of the reasons it is difficult to stick to New Year's Resolutions is because we generally bite off more than we can chew! When you are trying to exercise every day, and cut out sweets, and eat more vegetables, and drink more water...it can become daunting! Try picking only ONE goal to work on for the month of January, and allow yourself to concentrate on just that one goal. Then, choose a different goal in February. This is more realistic, and makes it easier to be successful. Remember, you have 12 months to work towards your goals...you don't have to achieve everything in 12 days!

2. Get a Coach! A qualified personal fitness trainer will not only get you on a realistic fitness program, they can also ensure you don't get hurt and you reach your goals. Remember, if money is tight, you don't have to see a personal trainer every day or even every week. You can hire a personal trainer to simply check in with you every couple of weeks. This makes it more affordable, but also ensures that your workout routine stays interesting and gets results. To find a qualified and experienced trainer near you, go to the Personal Trainer Locator found on www.IDEAfit.com.

3. Bend, Reach, Play, Push, Pull, Squat! One of the best ways to help control your weight is to simply make sure you include more activity during your day. Try getting in and out of your chair (chair squats) 10 times every time the phone rings, or take all your phone calls while pacing your office (instead of sitting down), or set your watch alarm to remind you to do a set of toe touches every 30 minutes. Taking the stairs (instead of the elevators) or wrestling with your kids (or dog!) burns more calories than you might imagine. It all adds up! The people who have the easiest time managing their weight are often NOT the most avid exercisers, but simply the most active during the day.

4. Sleep! Most people simply don't get enough sleep each night, and it makes it much more difficult to keep active during the day. A good night's sleep can do wonders to help keep you energized and on your toes. It will also help give you the energy you need at night to take that 10 minute walk after dinner that always seems so difficult to do when you are tired and sleepy.

5. Find a Partner and Take a Class! Research has shown that people who have a friend or partner to work out with are often more likely to stick to their fitness programs. So, find a partner who you enjoy spending time with, and sign up for a dance class, yoga class or weight training class. Not only will you enjoy having the company, you will get into a routine with other people with similar goals. Classes can make exercise a whole lot of fun, and help make a workout seem shorter than it really is! Remember, classes don't necessarily have to be gym workouts. Some of the best classes to take can be found at your local recreation or community center or church.

6. Don't Buy Into the Magic Pill! The first three months of the year will be full of images and promises of fast weight loss pills, programs and workouts. Don't buy it! Life-long weight control and successful exercise is not about producing instant results, but rather incorporating healthy habits over time. Be patient with yourself, and remember there is no quick fix to health and fitness. It is a lifestyle that must be realistic for YOU if you want to be able to stick to it forever.

7. Drink Water! Water will help keep you feeling energized, help control your appetite and do wonders for your skin and body before, during and after you workout. Try filling up a big bottle of water in the morning, and carry it with you throughout the day. Do your best to finish the entire bottle before you go to bed, and keep track of how much water you are drinking each day. The more water you drink, the more you will WANT to drink.

Jay Blahnik is one of the world's most recognized fitness instructors and serves as a spokesperson for *IDEA's Inspire the World to Fitness™* initiative. He is also the Spokesperson and Educational Consultant for the Nautilus Health & Fitness Group® and he is a NIKE Athlete. Based in Laguna Beach, California, Jay will be a member of the faculty at the *IDEA World Fitness Convention®* taking place in San Diego, July 7-11, 2004. Historically, this event attracts more than 4,000 fitness professionals from over 65 countries.

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world's leading membership organization of health and fitness professionals, with more than 19,000 members in more than 80 countries. Since 1982, *IDEA* has provided health and fitness professionals pertinent information, educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective fitness and lifestyle programs. For more information on *IDEA* events, publications, educational products, member services or other activities, visit the *IDEA* Web site at www.ideafit.com.

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