Most people think that because my job requires me to be in the gym all day long, that I don't have trouble finding time to exercise.

> *They're wrong.*

Most people think that I eat great all the time and never have temptations with food that's not healthy.

> *Wrong.*

Most people assume that it's easy for me to stick to a healthy lifestyle plan because I don't have kids.

> *Sorry, but wrong again.*

All of the statements above could be assumed true and rightfully so. But I do have the same issues, same struggles, and same problems that most people have throughout a given day. Just because I am a trainer, I am not immune to any of the same pitfalls that you have.

So what do I do to be successful throughout my week? How do I avoid going for fast food at the end of my day when I don't really want to go home on Monday night at 8:30 pm and cook a meal, finish eating at 9:30 pm, go to bed around 11 pm or so, and turn around and do it again the next day?

Here are a few tips that I want to share with you that help me stay on track:

1. **Exercise 3 days a week (Minimum):** this is my goal every week, no matter what, come hell or high water. I always shoot for 3 days a week minimum. Nothing less. If I get less, I'm probably going to be off my game, not as energetic and feeling bad. Even if I go away on a retreat or a vacation, I strive for 3 days. Do I want more days? Absolutely! Most weeks I actually get 4 to 5 days of exercise. But a minimum of 3 days is where I set the bar. If I shoot for at least 3 days, then I know if my week gets really busy (which lately they have been), then at least I know I got my minimum in for the week. Set a number that's realistic for you and hit it! Every . . . single . . . week!

2. **Exercise for at least 20 minutes:** this is another minimum that I set, but I really dislike exercising for only 20 minutes. My mindset used to be to exercise 60 - 90 minutes, every time. This was fine back in my thirties, but then some things changed. I got busier with work, I don't have the same energy that I did when I was thirty and I don't have the time. Currently, I do get in about 45 minutes most days that I exercise. But let me tell you this; if I am only exercising for 20 minutes, it's all out! I put my headphones on to stay focused, try my best not to talk for long during rest time and I keep my intensity high. All of these things help me at work between clients because I have limited time and I need to make it count. Even though it took me some time to adjust to the changing restraints in my life, I don't think I would be successful reaching my goal of 3 times of week of exercise without being more efficient with my time at work.

3. **Sleep at least 6 hours per night (minimum):** this is another bar that I set for myself. Earlier this year, I was only getting 4 hours of sleep most nights. It threw my thyroid off. I was missing my workouts and it was effecting my mood. I didn't really know about my thyroid issues until I had bloodwork done, which showed that I had mild hyperthyroid disease. I was upset about this for a week. Then I just asked myself, "what can I do or change that might help?" I changed my sleep pattern immediately. After four months I went back to the doctor to have my bloodwork done again and the results showed things were back to normal. Coincidence? I'm not sure and I honestly don't care at this point. What I do care about is that I made a change in one of my lifestyle patterns, and my blood work improved. I'll take it.

4. **Put myself in a positive environment:** What does this mean? Here's are three examples. If I want to drink less alcohol this month, yet I go to a bar every Friday and Saturday night, what do you think my chances are of not having a drink? If I want to stay away from fattening foods, yet I meet up with my friend Lou at Five Guys every Friday night and my other friend Billy for ice cream at Springers every Saturday and Sunday, what do you think my chances are of staying away from fattening foods? If I want to lose weight but I go to the store and buy tubs of ice cream to keep in my freezer at home, what do you think might happen? My point is, you need to put yourself in the best possible environment, preferably one that doesn't tempt you, to achieve success. YOU do have control of your environment. Yes, you do. Nobody is making you go or do anything without your permission. I work to keep myself out of those environments that might tempt me to go against my goals.

5. **Plan food ahead of time.** Man, this one saves me! I don't want to cook when I get home late at night, but I do it because I have created a habit of doing it over the years. In a perfect world though, I would rather not do it. I am mentally tired when I finish a long shift at work, which affects me physically. If I don't have my meal(s) planned ahead of time at home, when I drive by McDonalds and the diner on the way home and smell that food, it would be easier for me to just go get it and call it a night. I unfortunately did just that one night in August. While obviously it didn't kill me, I don't like doing that unless it's planned - - that's what my Wednesday and Saturday nights are for. I do love some fast food from time to time. But when it has control of me and I don't have control over it, I feel defeated.