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**New Year's Resolutions**

**Fit For Life Physical Therapy**

It is that time of year! We are all making New Year's resolutions, and the gyms will become crowded with new members for the next month or two. You may have taken a short break from running, walking, or going to the gym as you have finished your autumn training cycle or gotten busy during the holidays. You are probably making big running or walking goals for the new year, whether you are looking at training for a 5k, 10k, half marathon, marathon, or ultramarathon. While the new year is a fun time to get back on track, it is important to make a well-thought-out plan to reach your goals and avoid injury. Here are a few tips to help you get started.

Try making “SMART” goals. We are much more likely to succeed if our goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based.

**Specific:** Goals like “run faster” or “walk more” are not extremely helpful. Try to be specific in how you want to accomplish this. How many days each week do you want to run or walk? What time of day is best for your schedule? What kind of mileage are you going to start with or target? Do you have a specific race for which you want to prepare?

**Measurable:** How are you going to measure your progress? Are you going to keep track of your miles using an app like Strava or Garmin Connect? Is your goal to simply complete a certain race or distance? Do you have a goal time?

**Achievable:** Are your goals achievable based on your running or walking history? Is it a faster time for a specific distance or to train for a slightly longer race?Running an ultramarathon might not be a great goal if you have only run half-marathons or only have one marathon under your belt. Try to think of what the next logical progression would be. Please touch base with us at Fit For Life Physical Therapy or one of your MIT Coaches if you would like to discuss this next step.

**Relevant:** Next, make sure your goals are relevant. Do they make sense for you? Try thinking about why your goals are important to you.

**Time based:** Lastly, make sure each goal is time based. Is there an ultimate date of your goal race or for your goal mileage? Try breaking it down by week and make short term goals to get there.

You also cannot forget about injury prevention. It is important to consider your recent history of running, walking, and working out. What kind of mileage have you been doing? How many days per week have you been training? Have you been incorporating speed work?

Consistency and small changes are keys to avoiding injuries. In general, you should only increase mileage by up to 10 percent per week, and it is never a bad idea to take an easier week every few weeks. In addition, make sure to keep your long runs less than 50% of your total weekly mileage. Try changing only one variable at a time (speed, frequency, or distance).

In addition, try incorporating injury prevention exercises into your goals. The “[Fit For Life Physical Therapy Runners and Walker’s 10](http://www.fitforlifephysicaltherapy.com)” is a great place to start (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c2c162f5ffd202d56f25b36/t/5f682fb0c9621301a21efde6/1600663476765/Updated+Runners+and+Walkers+10+-+2020.pdf>). Try performing these exercises 2-3x/week. These exercises focus on running and walking specific strength, stability, and flexibility.

Fit For Life Physical Therapy is proud to be the official Marathoner in Training and Fleet Feet in-house sports medicine partner. We care for people of all activity levels - to help prevent, recover from, or rehabilitate sports & orthopedic injuries. We are proud to move people every day.

Please visit our website <https://www.fitforlifephysicaltherapy.com/>, email us at [info@fitforlifephysicaltherapy.com](mailto:info@fitforlifephysicaltherapy.com), or call or text us at any of the phone numbers for our three convenient locations inside Fleet Feet Columbus stores:

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