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Paths to **FITNESS SUCCESS**

By Candice Graham

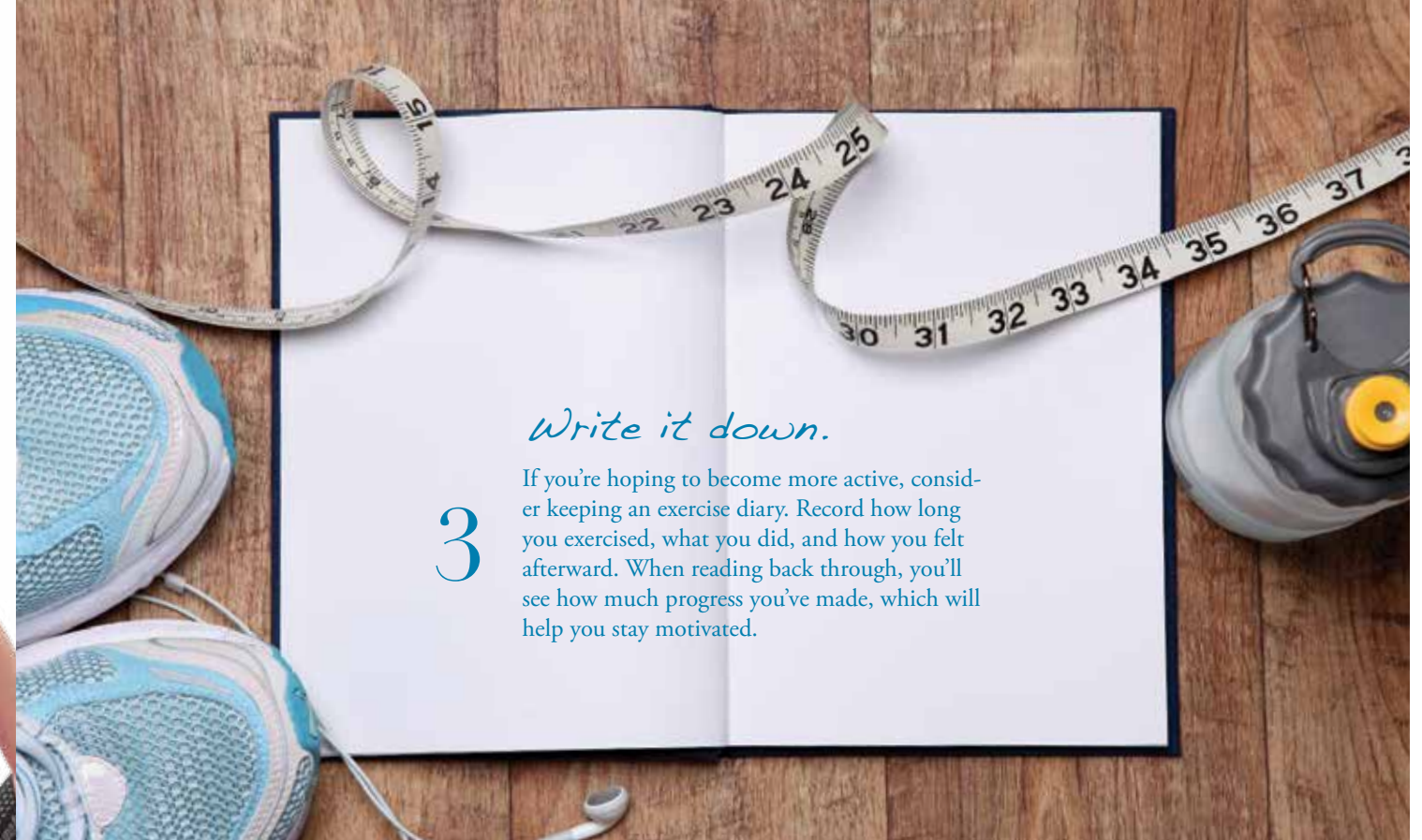
If working out doesn't rank high on your list of favorite things, you're not alone. Many people start out with great intentions, but eventually lose the motivation it takes to stick to a healthy, regimented fitness routine. If you ask fitness experts, they will tell you that setting simple, attainable goals is the secret to staying on track. Here are 5 simple tips for developing a fitness plan that you can stick to—and some words of wisdom from **Julie Cole** ▶ an instructor at Pure Barre Chattanooga who knows what it takes to get and stay motivated.

1 Don't be too eager. Fitness goals can either overwhelm you or inspire you. If you try to achieve too much too fast, you might burn out before you see any real results. Try basing your fitness goals on your personality, lifestyle, and current level of fitness. Not very active? Start small, like by walking or lifting light weights. Young and energetic? Maybe give jogging a try. Just be sure to pick something you think suits you best, and don't be afraid to try a few things out before you find what's right for you.

2 Integrate exercise into your daily routine. If exercise is a part of your everyday schedule, it'll be easier to make a habit of it. Try consciously choosing the stairs instead of the elevator, walking up and down the sidelines while watching a game, or pedaling a stationary bike while watching TV at night.

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Reward yourself! Notice the positive feelings you have after a workout and feel the sense of accomplishment those bring. This type of internal reward can help you make a long-term commitment to regular exercise. External rewards can also help. If you reach a long-term goal like losing 10 pounds or running 5 miles, treat yourself to something that can help you achieve even more goals, such as new running shoes or fancy headphones to wear while working out.



Write it down.

3

If you're hoping to become more active, consider keeping an exercise diary. Record how long you exercised, what you did, and how you felt afterward. When reading back through, you'll see how much progress you've made, which will help you stay motivated.



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Grab a partner. Having someone else to hold you accountable can be a huge help. Whether it's a neighbor, friend, or family member, join forces to achieve your shared fitness goal. Be active with your kids, go on walks with neighbors, or take a local fitness class – all of these things will get you on your feet, and may evolve into more strenuous activity or focused interest as time goes on.



JULIE'S TOP TIP:

Find your "why." Why are you choosing to focus on your fitness? Is it for your family, health issues, beauty, vacation, strength, mental clarity, peace, or community? Discovering your "why" will help motivate you in times of weakness. Always remind yourself: "You are so much stronger than you think! You CAN do this!"