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For more than 30 years, the Pritikin Longevity Center® has been honored to count among its Alumni some of the most successful men and women on earth, including Nobel Prize winners, members of the U.S. Congress, authors, Academy-Award winners, philanthropists, and CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.

Funny thing is, success in the world does not always translate into success in healthy living. "Many renowned individuals struggle with personal goals to get in shape, lose weight, and live a healthier life," observes Jeffrey Novick, MS, RD, Director of Nutrition at Pritikin.

The solution, offers Novick, who has counseled hundreds of guests at Pritikin over the past decade, often involves using the very same business strategies used to achieve professional success.

Investors Business Daily

The national financial newspaper *Investors Business Daily* crystallized these strategies into "10 Secrets of Success" after years of interviewing and analyzing world-class leaders and visionaries in all walks of life. Each day, *Investors'* editors highlight one of the 10 strategies in their "Leaders & Success" column.

Here are *Investors Business Daily's* 10 Secrets of Success, but with a lifestyle-change slant. They can help you achieve success in the most important goal of all – a long and healthy life.

1. HOW YOU THINK IS EVERYTHING.

Always be positive. Think success, not failure. If, for example, you run into a day so hectic that your exercise plans are derailed, don't focus on the failure of that day. Focus on how to make the next day better.

"Taking charge of your thoughts instead of feeling overwhelmed helps you adopt healthy new

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behaviors,” advises Dr. Susan Grober, Director of Behavioral Health and Wellness at Pritikin.

“For exercise, maybe you’ll want to develop a shorter, more convenient workout that you can use on unusually busy days,” suggests Dr. Grober. “Don’t think ‘all or nothing.’ Twenty minutes of activity is better than none!”

Beware of a negative environment. Take the lead, for instance, when going out to dinner with friends. If someone suggests a pizzeria famous (or rather, infamous) for its double-cheese crusts, diplomatically suggest a restaurant that includes healthier options, like seafood, big salads, and grilled vegetables.

“In order to be healthy, you must believe that you can do what it takes, and that you have the resources available to you,” advises registered dietitian and fitness expert Jeffrey Novick. “A healthy attitude has a positive effect on the body. Thoughts held in mind produce actions after their own kind.”

2. DECIDE UPON YOUR TRUE DREAMS AND GOALS.

Write down your specific goals and develop a plan to reach them. “If you’ve never experimented with this one, you’re in for a great surprise,” encourages Pritikin’s Jeff Novick.

List your exact health goals (weight, cholesterol, blood pressure, exercise level, etc). Print out several copies and tape them to several oft-frequented places, like your computer monitor, refrigerator, and bathroom mirror.

Several times each day, review them. Read them aloud to yourself, particularly first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Make them, in effect, your own personal identity. Ultimately, they will become far more powerful than any urge you have during the day for a candy bar. That’s because nothing tastes as good as success feels. Nothing.

3. TAKE ACTION.

Goals are nothing without action. Don’t be afraid to get started *now*. Determine the five most important action steps for reaching your goals. Then take one step at a time.

If, for example, Step # 1 is making sure you eat a bowl of hot cereal with fresh fruit every morning, get Step #1 in motion before tackling Step #2. Throw the calorie-dense dry cereals and energy bars in your pantry into the trash, or take them to a local food bank.

Then stock up on bags of easy-to-microwave whole-grain hot cereal. When traveling, take a bag and a bowl with you. It's much easier to stick to your weight-loss goals when you start each day with a breakfast that sticks to your ribs, keeping you fueled and satisfied till noon.

4. NEVER STOP LEARNING.

Read as much as you can about health. Re-read chapters of your Pritikin Guidebook. Attend health expos. Better yet, make time for a refresher retreat at Pritikin to learn the latest in healthy living and reinvigorate your motivation.

Sharpen your skills. While at Pritikin, go to cooking classes and other practical real-world-living workshops. Take extra time with your exercise leaders to fine-tune your workout.

Back home, take a tour every month through the aisles in your grocery store to see if any new healthful and interesting products have appeared on the shelves.

At farmers' markets, pick out new fruits and vegetables. Ask the vendors for tips on how to prepare them.

If your exercise program is in a rut, try out new classes, join another gym, or hire a personal trainer.

Seek out those who look and feel great, and find out their secrets for success. Pritikin cardiologist Dr. Maurice Laszlo, trim and athletic, is turning 80 this year but looks much more like 60. "Our guests tell me, 'You're my role model. I want to be like you,'" smiles Dr. Laszlo.

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“I tell them, ‘You can! Just get on the treadmill 45 minutes a day the way that I do. Watch what you eat the way that I do. And here at Pritikin we’ll show you how. So go ahead and change!’”

Says a Chinese proverb: Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.

5. BE PERSISTANT AND WORK HARD.

“Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up,” counsels health enthusiast Novick. “Like our commitments to our careers, there will be difficult times and setbacks. But just as you wouldn’t throw out the career because of a bad day, you don’t want to give up your healthy new lifestyle when the going gets tough. Setbacks are part of the road to success.”

For example, if a waiter forgets to leave the bleu cheese dressing off your first-course salad, as you requested, it’s no cause for languidly responding, “Oh well, I guess I’ll order the Fettucine Alfredo for my next course.” Simply do not accept the dressing-drenched salad. Insist on another one – and insist on balsamic vinegar, salsa, or another low-calorie dressing on the side.

And if a well-intentioned colleague celebrates your birthday by baking double-chocolate brownies and bringing them to the office, well, there’s a big difference between eating one, while smiling graciously to the crowd, and eating three and four with your eyes on any leftovers you can smuggle home.

Relapses and setbacks do not equal failure. They only mean you’re human. Get back in the saddle, and praise yourself for all your success so far.

As in business and other professional endeavors, setbacks are also a chance to ask “What went wrong? How did the Oreo cookies get in the pantry?” They’re a chance for you to fix the problem (get the damn Oreos out of the pantry) and strengthen your commitment to your goals.

6. LEARN TO ANALYZE DETAILS.

Get all the facts. Take your time, for instance, to read labels when grocery shopping. Take your time when ordering at restaurants. Don’t let servers or friends rush you. Just two minutes of questions can do wonders for your arteries and your waistline.

Also, don't believe everything you hear about health, especially if it comes from the media. In a recent analysis of health information on 122 local television news, researchers found that the average airtime for health stories was a mere 33 seconds. Moreover, "egregious errors were identified that could harm viewers who relied on the information," reported lead investigator James M. Pribble, MD, and colleagues at the University of Michigan.

"There are many quacks and charlatans out there," cautions Jeffrey Novick. "Find out what the research is really saying. Learn to read and understand original research articles, or find people, like your educators at the Pritikin Longevity Center, to help you do this. Be willing to talk to experts, and always look for scientific conclusions that *repeatedly* have been proven to be true."

7. FOCUS YOUR TIME AND MONEY.

As with your professional goals, try not to let other people or events distract you from your health goals. If you need a week at Pritikin but the kids and grandkids want a week in Mexico, take the week with the family, but make every effort to carve out time later in the year for Pritikin. Your health is priority #1.

"Old habits die hard. It will take time and money to learn new habits," observes Novick. "It doesn't help that we live in a world where living healthy is not the norm. You will encounter distractions. These are not reasons to stop, only challenges to overcome. No investment is more important – or yields better dividends – than the investment in your health."

8. DON'T BE AFRAID TO INNOVATE. BE DIFFERENT.

Following the herd is a sure way to not only mediocrity in professional life but also ill health in your private life. Because of typical U.S. eating and drinking habits, the average American has a more than 50% chance of dying of heart disease, two-thirds of adult Americans are overweight or obese, childhood obesity and diabetes are nationwide epidemics, and the lifetime odds of developing high blood pressure are 90%.

Is this the path you want to follow? "In an 'insane' society," observes Jeff Novick, "it is the 'sane' person who appears to be 'insane.' Be different. Be healthy!!"

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“People always joked that I was in ‘disgustingly’ good health,” says John Baker, 84 years old, who has been following the Pritikin Program since the early 1980s. “Well, ‘disgusting’ is a great thing to be. I’m 5’11 and 155 pounds. I take no medications. I simply have no serious problems. I give Pritikin a lot of the credit.

“For 25 years, I’ve followed the Pritikin diet about 95% of the time, and I exercise regularly, walking 30+ minutes five times weekly. In fact, I intend to increase this somewhat.”

Eighty-four-years-old and *increasing* physical activity? Would that we were all so ‘disgustingly’ different!

9. DEAL WITH AND COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY.

No person is an island. Learn to understand and motivate others. Be willing to join and/or set up support systems to help both you and others. “Company is always stronger than will power,” says dietitian Jeff Novick, who enjoys organizing healthy cooking feasts with friends.

Enlist the help of others, including exercise trainers, experts, cooks, doctors, nutritionists, and fellow Pritikin Alumni, and enjoy the camaraderie that follows. For years, New York City Pritikin Alum and longevity expert Dr. Robert Butler has organized a weekend walking group in Central Park with Pritikin Alumni and friends.

“We have a delightful time,” smiles Dr. Butler, President of the International Longevity Center. “It’s a terrifically lively group of people – journalists, investments bankers, civil rights activists, and so on. With all the fascinating conversation, time flies while we’re walking!”

At Pritikin, health psychologist Dr. Grober conducts individual sessions to boost guests’ success in “Taking Pritikin Home.” In these meetings, they learn how to identify goals, select winning strategies, measure progress, access support, and cope with setbacks. Everyone leaves with an written “recipe” for success.

10. BE HONEST AND DEPENDABLE. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.

“Otherwise, steps ‘1’ through ‘9’ numbers won’t work,” points out Jeff.

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“Your health is YOUR responsibility. Take the initiative. Don’t wait for some magic bullet or magic pill to come along. Remember, the big secret in weight loss and health is: There is no secret. Just proper diet, lots of exercise, and a healthy, positive attitude.

“And there’s no better return on your investment. Your health is your greatest wealth!”