



THE BUSY PERSON'S HEALTH & FITNESS **BLUEPRINT**

How to motivate yourself to get fit
and healthy, even if you have been
inactive for years.

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I have a confession... I am naturally lazy. When I tell people this they never believe me but my husband can vouch for me - it's true! For over 20 years I have been completing sporting challenges and expeditions all around the world and the only way I can get fit for them is if I follow the blueprint I have outlined below.

But in recent years I have really put my blueprint to the test. Having smashed my leg up in a skiing accident that required two lots of reconstructive surgery I had a withered leg and had spent 2 years sat on my arse. I had never been so unfit. I had to stop to catch my breath at the top of the stairs! I had a stress related stomach problem that was making me vomit. Enough was enough. I made the decision that I had to put my health as a priority, especially now that I'm in my 40's and have a young family to support. I can't afford to be ill and my body just doesn't retain the fitness it used to when I was younger. Within 7 months I had gone from being on crutches to cycling over 500km from Barcelona to Valencia. Below I explain how I did it.

I truly hope you find this helpful. It's not about spending hours at the gym. I don't have time for that! Let me know what event you choose and don't forget to send me a finish line photo.

Bestest,
Debra



THE REPEATING CYCLE OF MY BLUEPRINT



01 MAKE A **COMMITMENT** TO YOUR HEALTH & FITNESS

Here's the thing - if you pay for gym membership or buy fitness DVDs or have some other 'get fit' strategy but you are reading this, then I'm guessing your current system is not working for you. If you are anything like me you possibly spend more time feeling guilty about the money you are wasting than actually getting fit! I convince myself that if I buy a new pair of trainers I'll go running more, but I don't because the reality is I don't have the self-motivation or the discipline to 'make' myself go out running. Plus I hate running! That's why I use this blueprint.

Going by the **trajectory** of your health, weight gain and fitness levels over the past 10 years, **what will you look and feel like 10 years from now** if you carry on doing what you are currently doing? That's what I asked myself in January, and I didn't like the answer.

If you have got to the point of acknowledging your system isn't working (or you abandoned your system years ago!) and you've had enough of looking and feeling this way, then it is time to try the below. If you always do what you've always done you'll always get what you have always got. **Make a decision to try something new.**

02 FIND AN **EVENT/CHALLENGE/ADVENTURE** AND PAY UP

Self-motivation is very hard to maintain without a goal to work towards. I have to actually **sign up for a challenge** and pay my money so I am **financially committed** if I have any hope of getting consistent with my training. I have often picked events or challenges where I have no previous experience of that sport/activity whatsoever. The key is to find something you are going to enjoy. It amazes me that so many people sign up to run a half-marathon but hate running. Don't do that to yourself! Aim for something 4-6 months ahead so you have time to get fit for it and pick something you'll enjoy.

Next, book the travel, book the time off work and **tell everyone what you plan to do.** The more people you tell, the more accountable you will be to see it through. Their support will be crucial to your success. Even better if you can get a friend or partner to sign up with you.

Be bold in your decision. We took a group of desk-bound office workers to the Arctic in 2015 - they had no previous experience of doing anything like it. With the right support and coaching they trained mentally and physically over a 6 month period, alongside busy jobs and raising kids, and they smashed it. So think big and choose a challenge that seems totally beyond you. Trust that number 3 below will get you there.

03 GET A **COACH**

If you haven't managed to keep yourself motivated and exercising weekly in the past, that's unlikely to change in the future. You need external input because you don't have the time or the skill to be working it all out for yourself. I did Sports Science as part of my University degree and I still employ a coach. Why? Because I'm busy trying to be a mum and run two businesses. Because they can assess your level of fitness and the time you have available and tailor a programme for you. **Because a specialist coach can show you how to train smart and get maximum results for the minimum amount of training time possible.** Because a coach will help you set goals and milestones that will keep you motivated. Because I need someone to **hold me accountable and get my butt moving!**

If you are reading this and thinking ‘I can’t afford a coach’ let me ask you... **how much is your health worth to you?** What investment do you currently make in your health? How much do you spend a month? If you can’t work due to a stress related illness, lower back pain, heart disease or similar what would the cost be to you and your family? I would argue that you **can’t afford not to spend a bit of money on this.**

04 TRAIN FOR 4 - 6 MONTHS

Training for 4-6 months will give you huge health **benefits including weight loss, reduced stress and more energy** and this in itself is very motivating. As you see and feel the results you’ll want more. But it will only happen if you **reduce the friction** - the stuff that makes it easy to skip a training session. If I don’t make it super easy for training sessions to happen I won’t bother. So I’ve learnt to put in place a load of friction-reducing strategies; mental ones, physical ones and practical lifestyle ones.

My clothes, shoes and heart rate monitor are laid out by the side of my bed so I have to stand on them to get out of bed! If I’m traveling with work I book hotels that have a gym so there is **no excuse not to train.** I make up a vision board about my challenge and put it somewhere where I can’t fail to see it every day. When it’s raining and I don’t feel like getting out there I visualise my kids stood on the finishing line and how amazing it will feel to hug them and model for them how it is possible to set big goals and achieve them. **Work out what causes friction for you personally, then take steps to avoid it.**

05 COMPLETE EVENT/ CHALLENGE/ADVENTURE

Kit buying - YES! Almost worth doing just for the new kit, but the benefits go much deeper than that of course. When we take part in a challenge that provides space from our daily lives and pushes us mentally and physically to our limits **we come back changed.** It’s impossible not to be. It builds resilience within us that makes daily stresses seem more manageable. We can forever say to ourselves, ‘Well if I got through that then I can get through this’. **It super-charges our resilience.**

Then there are the people you meet. These challenges tend to strip back the layers of self-preservation and consequently you get to go deep with the people running/cycling/skiing/canoeing/kayaking/hiking/dog-sledding alongside you. **You make friends for life** and will probably have already planned a follow-up challenge with them before you’ve even got to the end of this one. And that is, of course, the crucial bit. This blueprint needs to be repeated. Get home, do your dirty washing, and **book that next challenge!**

06 MAKE MEMORIES - PLEASE SEND ME A PHOTO!

Take heaps of photos and videos, as reliving the memories through these images will inspire you to take on another challenge. I’d love to see a photo that sums up what you have achieved. Please do share these on social media with me ([Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#)) or email them to debra@debrasearle.com. You can do this.

MY MEMORIES*

* I had no previous experience of most of these sports before I signed up for the challenges below. Some were free and others cost me thousands. There's something for everyone's budget. Be bold in your decisions and pick something you'll enjoy. This may require trying something completely new, as how will you know if you enjoy it until you try it? For more photos and videos of these challenges head to my website - debrasearle.com.



01. The Yukon River Quest, Canada. 02. Adventure Race. 03. Sailing the Southern Ocean. 04. Sportive Bike ride. 05. Park Run with my kids. 06. Team Ironman distance Triathlon - just the bike bit obviously as I'm not a marathon runner! 07. Rowing the Atlantic. 08. Monte Carlo Rally in a 1957 Alfa Romeo. 09. Vogalonga in Venice, Italy. 10. Traverse of Baffin Island, Arctic Circle (unfinished business!). 11. Sisterhood Cross Channel Challenge. 12. Long distance multi-day cycle challenge - Atlantic to the Mediterranean.