



Kickstart your year by setting goals and staying active

If you want to be more active in 2025, commit to a specific activity, like walking to work or school every day, writes columnist Thorsten Gohl. Photo courtesy of Thorsten Gohl

Northern News Services

As we step into a new year, it's a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our past experiences and set intentions for the future. Those delicious Christmas cookies, dinners, lunches, and, of course, all that eggnog, tell us that we may have gained some weight and need to make some changes. But why not use the new year as a chance to embrace those moments? You enjoyed the fresh cookies right out of the oven and the holiday family dance moves. You love the hot chocolate after an in-

tense family hockey game on the Dehcho (Mackenzie) River.

These experiences remind your body, mind, and spirit that you did good things for yourself. And that includes the hours of movie watching, gift unwrapping, and feeling full from all those delicious treats.

Many of us make New Year's resolutions, often focusing on health and fitness. This year, let's explore how we can embrace physical activities, recreation, and sports as integral parts of our lives while being happy with who we are and what we do.

The first step is to not call them resolutions or promises. Set realistic and achievable goals. Instead of overwhelming yourself with lofty ambitions, consider starting small. For instance, if you want to be more active, commit to a specific activity, like walking to work or school every day. And yes, that can include your home office, even if it's downstairs in the basement. Or how about getting the videos of those holiday dance moves out and challenging yourself to win the family dance-off this year?

As you build confidence and

stamina, you can gradually increase the intensity or duration of your activities. Consistency is key, but taking that first step is the most important part of it all.

The new year is the perfect time to try something new. Explore different physical activities that you and your family might enjoy. Whether it's joining a local sports team, taking up yoga, or trying out a new dance class, experimenting with various activities can help you discover what you love. Look for community programs or online classes that cater to

all ages and skill levels. The goal is to find activities that excite you and keep you engaged.

Involve your family in your physical activity goals. Plan regular family outings that include physical activities, such as hiking, drum dancing, hand games, biking, or playing sports together. Not only does this promote a healthy lifestyle, but it also strengthens family bonds and creates lasting memories. Consider setting a family challenge, like completing a certain number of steps each week or trying a new sport all together. The shared experience will motivate everyone to stay active.

Recreation is an essential part of physical literacy. It's not just about structured sports; it's also about finding joy in movement. Look for opportunities to incorporate recreation into your daily life. This could be as simple as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, playing catch in the backyard, or having a dance party in the living room. And yes, we love those dance parties. Remember, the holiday family dance-off is coming sooner than you think. The key is to make movement a fun and regular part of your routine.

Having a support system can make a significant difference. Share your goals with friends or family members and encourage them to join you on your journey. You can also track your progress together, celebrate milestones, and motivate each other to stay active. Consider using apps or journals to log your activities and reflect on your achievements. If you are interested in sports,

reach out to a territorial sport organization and see what they recommend. Get support from the sport and recreation partners in the NWT, as they have fabulous programming set up already and would love to help and support your journey. Go

onto our website (physicalliteracy.info), click Sports, and you will find the right person to talk to.

As you embark on your journey, remember to celebrate your progress, no matter how small. Acknowledge the effort you put into staying active and the positive changes you experience. Celebrating milestones can boost your motivation

and reinforce your commitment to your goals.

We might not always have the perfect facilities in the North, especially in our small communities, but so what? Maybe offer to help the recreation person in your community by committing to one to two hours per week to assist with the after-school program, be an on-ice helper with your local minor hockey association, or get that dust-covered table tennis table out of the corner and set it up in the youth centre. It gets you out, rewards you for supporting yourself and your community, and guess what? It gets you active and you will have fun.

Let's celebrate 2025 by staying active together, showing the country and the world the beauty that surrounds us in the NWT. By setting our personal goals, being active, healthy, and feeling good, we are role-modelling and supporting ourselves and those that surround us.

Wishing you all a wonderful 2025!



GUEST COMMENT

Thorsten Gohl is the co-ordinator of Physical Literacy NWT

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