

1 Step Back, 2 Steps Forward Mike Kramer, Staff Writer SparkPeople

"Fall seven times, get up eight." - Japanese Proverb

"Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish." - John Quincy Adams

"The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials." - Chinese Proverb

"Never give in. Never. Never. Never. Never." - Winston Churchill

"Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance." - Samuel Johnson

These quotes all say the same thing. No matter how many obstacles you run into, what matters is that you're able to overcome each of them, one at a time.

"Two steps forward, one step back" is usually a negative term to describe someone who is having trouble making progress. But switched around, "1 Step Back, 2 Steps Forward" means that instead of grousing or feeling guilty about a misstep, you can still come out ahead if you put your head down and push forward.

Steps back can take many forms: a family vacation, breaks in your routine, personal tragedies, injuries, or that lost weekend in front of the tube. A big mistake people make when trying to get healthier is that when they fall off a bit or something happens, they think they "have to start over". Wrong! When missteps do happen, a better strategy is to simply take two steps forward. You're still ahead of where you were before, far beyond the starting line.

With healthy eating and exercising, as long as you're consistently out-stepping your steps back, you're ahead of the game. If you expect perfection (and many of us do), you're setting yourself up for disappointment and guilt.

Guilt can be debilitating to your healthy habits. When you mess up (or even when things are messed up for you), it's natural to feel guilty. At that point, you have a choice: to let that guilt plummet you into a cycle that could spit you out worse off than before, or to accept the step back and say "where do I go from here?"

Of course, consistent success is still something to strive for. You don't want to roller-coaster up and down. That's an "old" habit, remember? And the 1Step/2Step strategy doesn't lessen the need to do your best. You should still work hard to keep those steps back from happening. But it helps to be prepared with a plan and a positive attitude for when they do happen.

Many times, this means a rededication, a refocusing, and a recommitment. You might want to look at your program and see why it's allowing those landmines to stick around. Use it as a learning process. Ask how you can keep that misstep from happening again.

- Take a walk in the woods to clear your head and regroup.
- Have a personal "bounce back" motto that will re-energize you. Put it everywhere.
- Back off a little if you think you're trying too hard.
- Return to the basics. Are you making it too complicated and tough on yourself?
- Plan ahead for irregularities in your schedule.
- Stay aware of what you're doing. One meal mess up can turn into a one day mess up, a one week mess up if you're not careful.
- Remind yourself of your success so far when you need a boost.

Just make a commitment to do things as right as possible as much as you can.

