

# Buffing Up Your Resolve

## Find the Right Foundation to Get Fit

by Molly Hoeg

**R**ight about now, many of you who resolved on January 1 to lose weight or to stay fit – No. 1 and No. 5 on the New Year's Resolution Top 10 – may find it hard to maintain that promise to yourself.

Trust me, you're not alone. The Statistic Brain Research Institute, a national group of passionate number crunchers, also reports that 71 percent of those making resolutions maintain them for two weeks, 64 percent hang in there for a month, but ultimately only about 8 percent keep on track.

Now here's the good news: Plenty of support exists around the Big Lake for you to meet your fitness goals. Some people even travel here just to join programs that help them get healthier.

You'll find private fitness centers (20 in the Duluth/Superior metro area alone), professional trainers, support programs and even a stay-on-site fitness operation.

The key to success, say regional wellness experts and those whom they've helped, is to establish healthy habits to replace unhealthy ones.

Jonathan Nedeljkovic, owner of U Weight Loss Clinic in Thunder Bay, has an extensive background in sports nutrition and exercise. The clinic has served nearly 1,000 clients in its three years.

Jonathan prefers personal coaches, one-on-one, to educate, guide and motivate. Adopt a progressive program, he says; small steps to start a long journey. "If you are coming from zero exercise, it is best to start by developing a five-minute-a-day habit. I always ask my clients, 'How likely are you to do this?' People are motivated if they are successful at something."

Some people need and favor an intense kickstart.

Just ask Janet Erickson, who lives on a farm in Luck, Wisconsin.

Janet and her husband, Ron, weren't worried about their health. After all, they lead busy lives and enjoy getting outside to ride their mules. But getting on and off the animals was increasingly difficult.

"I was at a point in my life where things needed to change," Janet says. "My weight was holding me back."

Janet wanted to shed about 100 pounds and tried a number of weight-loss methods. "I think they didn't work because you were on a diet, and diets don't work. It's all about a lifestyle change."

Janet decided she needed something extra and found Fitness North, a residential fitness program based in Two Harbors, Minnesota. The weeklong program in May 2012 changed her lifestyle and her life.

"It is the hardest thing I've ever done, but I'm glad I did it."

Removed from the bad habits and temptations at home, and with the support of other participants and trainers, Janet learned new health tools, even meal choices.



COURTESY NANCY JO TURBS

Adding nordic walking poles to your stroll can enhance your work out and make it more fun, as these walkers near Grand Marais, Minnesota, discovered. The Great Lakes Nordic Walkers plan public demonstrations of nordic walking April 19 in Duluth and April 21 in Grand Marais. Attendees can try different poles, learn more about the activity or go on a group walk.



"They tell you what you are going to eat, but you have to prepare it yourself. The program worked for me because they taught us how to do fitness and nutrition together."

Sending you home with the right tools for better living is the point of Fitness North, says Sheryl Babbitt, co-owner of the business. "Our goal is to promote healthy habits that can last a lifetime."

The trainers and nutrition experts there teach people how to start with modest changes. They encourage you to get more active by choosing something you like to do — and then doing it.

Since the program is on Lake Superior's doorstep, the great outdoors becomes an exercise space. Trainers get participants out every day to trails and parks. The daily regimen involves six to eight hours of physical activity, starting with an early walk along the shore before breakfast and continuing inside with workouts in the pool, floor exercises and on equipment, then more energetic hiking.

Modifying what and how you eat takes a big step toward weight and fitness goals. Nutrition experts there advise eating more fresh, unprocessed foods. They teach how to plan meals so you have time to make good choices and avoid those fast-food stops.

You learn how to read food labels.

"If you can't pronounce an ingredient," says Sheryl, "you probably shouldn't be eating it."



COURTESY JANET ERICKSON

**Janet and Ron Erickson weren't worried about their health. After all, they lead busy lives and enjoy getting outside to ride their mules.**

Janet lost 10 pounds at the weeklong program and continues to improve, having lost 58 pounds.

She now dedicates time for daily physical activity and teaches water aerobics classes. Her husband, Ron, inspired by Janet, has lost 35 pounds toward his 60-pound goal.

"For my birthday," says Janet, "we went camping on the North Shore and hiked 14 miles. I just had to share where I had been while at Fitness North with my husband."

To date, Fitness North has had more than 200 participants. Its core weeklong residence session is led by a team of personal trainers and a health-and-wellness management coach.

Program owners plan new offerings this year to reach more people. In spring, they will introduce a three-day

weekend session. In summer, they will run weeklong camps to help families address eating issues and embrace physical activity. Another program for the 50+ age group is being considered.

Lori Schaefer, whose Minneapolis-based Marketing That Matters works with clients on Minneapolis's North Shore, signed up for one of Fitness North's first sessions. As Lori explains, she'd let work take over her life, ignored her well-being and her weight had hit 381 pounds. She decided to turn things around.

"Attending Fitness North jumpstarted my transformation, and I never looked back."

Getting away to focus on herself was essential to solidify her resolve and sharing goals and trials with other participants helped. "Having the emotional and mental support from someone who's been there is key."

Lori lost 21 pounds during her stay at Fitness North, but the regimen she set for herself at home fueled her success, she says. At Leif Anderson Fitness in Duluth, transformation coach Leif helped Lori to develop a long-term fitness and nutrition program that worked. She's lost 211 pounds in two years.

"I went all in and told myself that quitting was simply not an option. And when I faltered on the plan, I was able to restart and get right back on

### Good to Know

Fitness North, Two Harbors,  
Minnesota: [www.fitnessnorth.net](http://www.fitnessnorth.net)  
Nordic Walking, Minnesota:  
[greatlakesnordicwalkers.com](http://greatlakesnordicwalkers.com)  
U Weight Loss Clinics, Thunder  
Bay: [www.uweightloss.com](http://www.uweightloss.com)  
Northern Michigan University  
Recreational Sports:  
[www.nmu.edu/sportsrecsports](http://www.nmu.edu/sportsrecsports)

### Fun to Know

Top 10 New Year's Resolutions

1. Lose Weight
2. Get Organized
3. Spend Less, Save More
4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest
5. Stay Fit and Healthy
6. Learn Something Exciting
7. Quit Smoking
8. Help Others in Their Dreams
9. Fall in Love
10. Spend More Time with Family

the program. ... I am now in the equation of my life," says Lori, whose inspirational blog is called In the Equation.

"I have a list of non-negotiables; I get in activity and exercise every day, and I am eating healthy."

Healthy habits help more than your body, says Katie Theut, the informal recreation and fitness manager at Northern Michigan University in Marquette.

"Fitness is one component of wellness," she says. "We look at eight dimensions of wellness," says Katie—emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social and spiritual. A commitment to physical exercise can enhance the other dimensions. "When you come to a facility or go to fitness classes, you are taking time for social wellness."

Local universities and colleges often have recreational or fitness programs available. All the NMU Recreational Sports facilities and programs are open to the public. It serves about 3,000 student members and 1,000 community members.

Michigan Technological University in Houghton maintains



COURTESY LORI SCHAEFER

**"I am now in the equation of my life," says Lori Schaefer.**

trails open summer and winter to the public, and at the University of Minnesota Duluth, the Recreational Sports Outdoor Program offers sports and recreation clubs and outings.

One advantage of living by the Big Lake is a wealth of places to get active outdoors. All of our lakeside cities have trail systems for walking, cycling, mountain biking, hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Many take advantage of those trails for relaxation and exercise.

Nancy Jo Tubbs of Ely, Minnesota, likes a brisk walk, but it

must fit into her busy 12-hour work days as owner of Camp Van Vac, her family's resort since 1917.

When Nancy hits the trails, she invites guests to join her. That's how she recently discovered a new way to enhance the fitness value of her walks.

The guest was Linda Lemke, founder and leader of the Great Lakes Nordic Walkers, a Twin Cities-based consortium of certified nordic walking instructors and event organizers.

Nordic walking involves use of poles, similar to ski poles. The first official nordic walking poles were introduced in 1997, the year it was popularized in a book by Norwegian fitness expert Marko Kantaneva.

Linda, aka the "Nordic Walking Queen," describes the activity as "the simple addition of nordic walking poles to your daily walk."

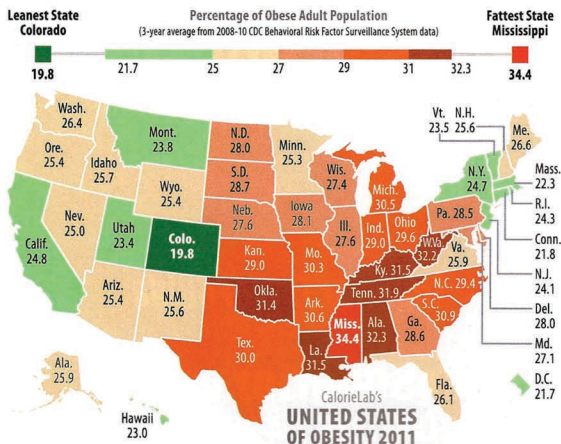
By adding poles, and thus your upper body, she says, "you engage up to 30 percent more of the body's muscles in your weight-bearing exercise. In addition, it increases your heart rate and caloric burn and is easier on your joints. ... Poles make it fun and easy. You don't feel like you are working any harder."

"One of the real appeals is that the sticks make it easier," Nancy says. "It is easier on your hips, knees and ankles, yet it is more of a workout. That is my incentive to get out and do it."

Nancy loves the routine. "Now I have two sets of sticks, and friends like to walk with me and try them out. The only downside is that it's hard to swat flies when holding sticks!"

"When I interact with people from the North Shore, they are outdoors already," says Linda. "Nordic Walking is something they can do right outside their door, connecting them to the outdoors and friends and family all at the same time."

"This is something everybody can do."



Freelance writer Molly Hoeg enjoys skiing, hiking and generally hanging out by the Big Lake.