

BONUS
CLIP OUT
YOUR OWN
PERSONAL
COMMITMENT
CONTRACT!

Have the Audacity to Be Remarkable!

Motivational guru Susan Ershler gives you her tips on overcoming life's challenges – be it climbing a mountain, losing those stubborn pounds or confronting your personal demons.

BY STEFANI JACKENTHAL

You may not be a mountain climber like Susan Ershler, but by learning to break your intimidating fitness challenges into bite-sized pieces, you can use her strategy to prep for your first competition, train for a marathon, or just step into the gym for the very first time. At 54, Susan can say that she's climbed the Seven Summits – the world's seven highest mountain peaks – but, just like you, she was overwhelmed when starting out. Standing below Mount McKinley's daunting 20,320-foot summit for the first time, she was petrified. "My husband [a mountain guide] assured me we weren't going to climb it all in

one day, but bit by bit – by picking up my right leg and moving it forward and then picking up my left," she says. Master this approach, and you can not only reach your fitness goals, but also overhaul your entire life.

Begin by mapping out your goals – both big and small. "Making a plan with incremental milestones makes it less intimidating and keeps you on track," says Paul Weiss, PhD, senior program director at Asphalt Green, who has taught university classes about human motivation and sport psychology-peak performance. For instance, aim to beat a past race time, attempt distances that are longer or

"Visualize success and keep putting one foot in front of the other until you attain your dream. This achievement will irrevocably change your life."
- Susan

For extra motivation, join a group or find a training partner. It will get you out of bed when you want to hit snooze.

Tell us what you think!
What's the biggest challenge you've ever faced?
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SUSAN AND HER HUSBAND, PHIL, ON THEIR DESCENT OF MOUNT EVEREST.

more challenging than you have previously completed or if you are training for a figure contest, add a new body part and increase weight resistance bi-weekly. Breaking down a big challenge into these mini-victories will allow you to measure your progress

“You have to keep going even when you get knocked down. Expect obstacles.”

(in dates, hours, miles or weight) and feed off your success. These short-term goals will become the bits and pieces that collectively bring you to your long-term goal.

Once your plan is in place, draft a written contract (see sidebar) and keep yourself on track with some visual motivation. Before climbing Mount Everest, Susan hung photos of it near her desk at work as a constant reminder of her mission. And when she trained for her first figure contest (at 53!), she imagined herself successful. “I found it so inspirational to look at these incredibly fit women and visualize myself standing on stage, posing.” This strategy proved successful for her, placing fourth in her age category at her first figure competition, the Vancouver Classic, and taking home first prize at her second competition, the Emerald Cup. Keep your mind on your goals, and remember Susan’s stay-on-track mantra: “You only get one chance at life. Why wouldn’t you want to become all you’re capable of becoming?”

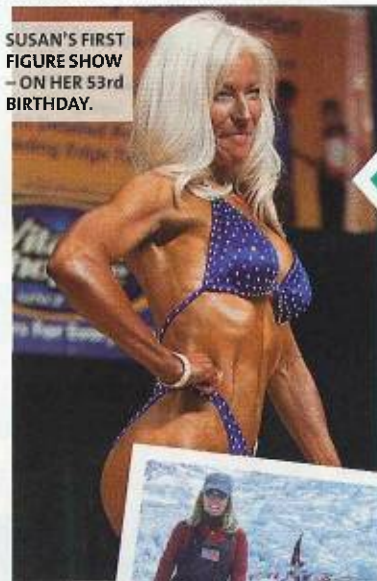
MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT CONTRACT TO SUCCESS

Stay on track by thoughtfully and honestly filling out this personal contract. It will become your trail map to success, clearly illustrating the path ahead. Read it daily for inspiration.

Before you start training for your goal, ask yourself why you’re doing it. Understanding that will keep you committed as you face obstacles.

- I _____ (name) _____ pledge to myself on _____ (dd/mm/yy) to take on the challenge of _____ (your goal) to be achieved on or by _____ (dd/mm/yy)
- I have chosen this exciting challenge because _____ (list 1–5 reasons) _____ and anticipate that sticking with my plan and achieving my goal will make me feel _____ (list 1–5 things)
- I know my personal obstacles may be _____ (list 1–5 obstacles) _____ and will combat them by _____ (list 1–5 defences to obstacles)
- I have told _____ (list names of 1–5) special people in my life, who I can count on for support and enthusiasm to get me through tough times and celebrate my successes.
- I promise to reward myself with _____ (list 1–5 things) for every benchmark toward my goal I meet _____ (list 1–5 benchmarks – mini steps)
- I promise not to beat myself up if I get briefly detoured, but to use my support system, stay true to myself and get back on track quickly.
- Upon achieving my goal I will celebrate by _____ (list your dream celebration)
- I will remind myself daily “If others have done it, so can I!”

Signature _____
Date _____



SUSAN'S FIRST FIGURE SHOW – ON HER 53rd BIRTHDAY.



SUSAN AT EVEREST BASE CAMP.

Reach The Top

Susan Ershler and her husband set a record for being the first couple to climb the highest mountain on each of the world’s seven continents. Then, she used the same tools to place fourth in her first figure competition and take first place in her second show.

Take Susan’s cues on motivation:

- Project your future.** “Formulate a clear picture in your mind of where you want to go and commit to it,” says Susan. When attempting her climbs, she always imagined herself at the top of the mountain, then worked backward from there.
- Prepare a plan.** Breaking an overwhelming task into smaller pieces will make it less intimidating, says Susan. While preparing for competition, Susan sets goals – for example, one to two pounds of fat loss – and lists them on her calendar for a visual reminder.
- Persevere.** “You have to keep going even when you get knocked down,” she says. Expect obstacles. “So you have one bad meal – so what?” she says. “Keep going until you get it.”