



PRESENTS AN EXCLUSIVE EBOOK:

HOW TO ACHIEVE

YOUR

GOALS

BY

KEEPING A JOURNAL

PROVEN STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN AND ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

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INTRODUCTION

Psst... you over there! We've got great news for you. We can offer a proven way to make a plan and stick to it through journaling. We're here to help you become your best self yet!

Journaling is more than a hobby or nice idea, it is a tool for success and offers an abundance of benefits once you establish the habit. Journaling is a great tool to look back at the past, see where you're at presently, and determine where to go and how to get to your next steps for the future. JRNL is an excellent resource to start you on your journey and pave your path to success.

COMMON GOALS: AN OVERVIEW

Goals are personal and can vary greatly from person to person. Journaling can assist you in achieving any goal you set out to accomplish. Throughout this ebook we will be focusing on the 5 most common goals and how you can achieve all of them.

1. Lose weight
2. Spend less, save more
3. Spend more time with family
4. Live a healthier lifestyle
5. Live a happier life

Let us begin by exploring the concept of journaling and the benefits of keeping a journal to enhance your everyday life.

WHO IS JOURNALING GOOD FOR?

Journaling is great for anyone who is looking to organize and gain a deeper understanding of their thoughts, for those in search of clarity and insight, for those who are seeking change, for those who wish to track progress, for those who want an unbiased outlet and for those who wish to document their story. In short, journaling is great for everyone.

A journal is not to be mistaken for a diary. Although often used interchangeably, there is a significant difference between the two. A diary is essentially a report of your daily events; what you did, where you were, who you were with, etc. A journal is much more personal and used more to examine these events; how it made you feel, if you experienced a shift in emotion, how your thought process evolved, what your next steps are, etc. Your journal is home to your motives, accomplishments, pitfalls, it reminds how you got there and why, not just that they happened.



The types of journals that exist are as unique as the people who create them. Common journal themes are:

- Wedding journal
- Cooking/Recipe journal
- Diet/Health/fitness journal
- Spiritual journal
- Travel journal
- Dream journal
- Professional/Success journal
- Meditation journal
- Personal development journal
- Family/Relationship journal
- Gratitude journal
- Finance journal
- Idea journal

THE BENEFITS OF JOURNALING

Your written thoughts are a way of preserving who you are when you write them and can provide great insight to your mind and soul. Journaling is not a new concept but it is constantly being reinvented. Few of us carry a pen and a paper around these days but we make it easy to document your life on the go. As the practice evolves, so do the benefits. If you don't already keep a journal, here are a few reasons why you should to start the year off right.

Journaling makes you smarter. Is that true? It sure is. A [report](#) from the University of Victoria shows that not only does your IQ benefit from writing and exercising your vocabulary, your Emotional Intelligence is also elevated as you increase your self-awareness.

Journaling encourages a deeper understanding of yourself. Expressive writing is [proven](#) to provide clarity. Reflecting upon your entries is an effective way to gain further insight into your subconscious.

Journaling keeps you accountable. By committing your goals to writing you can refer to them as reminders and inspiration to keep our success within reach. This is great for personal, professional and fitness goals. Try to update your journal daily to make sure you're getting the most of it as an accountability tool.

Journaling helps keep track of your accomplishments.

Seldom do we get a pat on the back or recognition for a job well done. Documenting your victories, however big or small, reminds you how far you've come and the progress that you've made. Don't neglect the small wins, a little progress every day can lead to big change.

Journaling helps to avoid making the same mistake twice. Be it recounting your documented thoughts, emotions, actions and reactions, you have the ability to see a situation objectively and make informed choices.

Journaling helps you heal. Your journal reveals an honest, trusting and non-judgemental side of you that may be difficult to consciously tap into. A [study](#) proved that expressive writing is therapeutic and can help physical and mental conditions. Expressing yourself through journaling strengthens your sense of self, it soothes troubled memories and brings peace in the release of those thoughts.

Journaling makes you happy. Recounting positive experiences is a sure way to put a little pep in your step. One of the happiest types of journals is the Gratitude Journal. [Gratitude is directly linked to happiness.](#) Simply record what you are grateful for every day. It can be one word or a detailed entry. Consciously keeping track of what you are thankful for will rewire the way you think and the way you look at the world. You will attract positivity and put more of it out into the world.

Journaling improves your communication. Expressing yourself in written form encourages actual vocalization. Reflecting on your entries and having a better understanding of yourself will further support your ability to effectively communicate. Even if your journal will forever remain a private outlet of expression, try writing for different audiences. Strengthening different forms of communication can be beneficial in social scenarios.

PUBLISHING YOUR JOURNAL

Have you ever loved a book so much, put it on your bookshelf to revisit years later just to fall in love with it again? That is essentially what publishing your journal entries can provide. Journaling helps you to efficiently tell your story and shed light on just how valuable your personal insight is. If you've ever thought your life story would make an interesting book, with JRNL it can be with our self-publishing platform. Publishing your journal offers the following benefits:

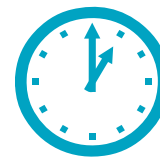
- See your story come to life
- Experience the intimacy of flipping through the pages of your own story
- Preserve your family history and print copies for your loved ones
- Publish your most cherished memories as a personal keepsake or one to share
- Turn the idea of your goals into something tangible and keep them nearby as a reminder to constantly work on them

- Print your life's happiest moments so you can regularly reflect on all you are grateful for
- Use it as a personal life-lessons textbook and review what you have learned so you don't have to re-learn it later
- Highlight your key learnings, the questions you have asked yourself as well as the quality of your own answers
- Each published journal is a volume of your Bigger Story
- It is a physical representation of all that you were, all that you are and all that you hope to be, all in your own words

Exclusive to JRNL is the ability to publish your entries into a beautifully crafted, customizable hardbound book of up to 900 pages long. With JRNL, your story is forever preserved and you have the ability to publish an unlimited amount of copies. Experience the achievement of reaching your goals in a way only a book can offer.

DEVELOPING THE HABIT

Starting your journal is easy, developing your journaling habit will require a little more work and is the biggest road block new journalers face. To benefit most from your journal, you should write every day. Don't worry about missing a day, this does not mean you've failed. However, if you only journal once a week you will not get much value out of the analytics as a lot of important happenings will go undocumented. Developing a journal habit will require a conscious effort. Here are a few tips to make the process easier.



Pick a time to journal. Like any other habit, consistency is key. Since you are introducing a new behavior to your routine, it is recommended to set time aside at the same time daily. If you're in a pinch, it can be as little as 5 minutes. If you are unable to commit to the same time every day, schedule some time daily according to your schedule before the week begins.



Focus on quality not quantity. Your journal entries do not need to be lengthy, they just need substance. It can be one word, one paragraph or one page, as long as what you're writing is relevant to how you're feeling when you write it. Regardless of how much or little you write, the act of writing will instill the habit.



Use lists and/or writing prompts. Sometimes you may be at a loss for what to write. Make a list of your favorite things, what makes you happy, what your fears are, what's on your bucket list, etc. If lists aren't your thing, JRNL offers writing prompts with our All About Me feature.



Learn to crave it. Believe it or not, you can actually teach yourself to consistently want to write in your journal in 4 easy steps.

- Step 1: Create a cue. Your cue is a trigger that tells your brain it's time to journal. JRNL offers basic reminders or you can do this by setting an alarm.
- Step 2: Establish a routine. When your alarm goes off go someplace where you're comfortable and start writing.
- Step 3: Reward yourself. You did it, good job! Now treat yourself to a coffee or time to relax.
- Step 4: Stick to this routine (or whichever routine you choose). This creates a habit loop. Eventually, every time you are cued, you'll want the reward and a habit will form.

ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS THROUGH JOURNALING

LOSE WEIGHT

Keeping a food journal is recommended and [proven](#) to help you shed pounds and keep them off. In order for a food journal to be an effective tool for weight loss, it needs your daily commitment and honesty. Remember, by cheating your food journal, you're cheating yourself. Properly tracking the amount you eat, what you're eating and when you eat it will allow you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your diet and eating habits. Follow these journaling tips and slim down in no time!

Choose your journal. Find a journal that you can make your own, one that gets you excited about tracking your progress. Using an online food journal increases your chance for success as it allows you to document your food intake in real time, wherever you are.

Establish a routine. Get into the habit of tracking what you eat and how much you're eating **immediately** after you eat, while all the information is fresh in your mind. You will forget the lunch time lattes or the after dinner snack if you don't record it right away. By tracking your consumption immediately you're also teaching your brain to associate eating, which can often be a thoughtless task, with consciously being aware of what you're putting in your body.

Spill the beans. Your food journal needs ALL the details. Everything you eat must be recorded. Every... single... thing. You had mayo on your sandwich? Record it. You got cheese on your burger? Record it. You used 2 tablespoons of peanut butter on your toast? You get the idea. You'll likely find that you're adding unnecessary calories to your diet which are working against your beach bod.

Be honest with yourself. We said it before and we'll say it again, be honest about your eating habits. Your food journal is a safe, judgement-free zone for you to record your dietary journey. When used properly, your food journal will assist you in recognizing what your habits are and the mistakes you could be making. Be on the lookout for unhealthy patterns and find [healthy alternatives](#).

The date, time and location are important. Why? Well, by documenting the day you ate something, when you ate it and where you were, you can easily identify when your eating habits are at their worst. Perhaps you like to binge eat at 2 o'clock because you don't have time to take lunch. Or maybe you bring donuts in for the team on Monday morning to kick off your weekly meeting. Review your weekly entries and ask yourself; are you skipping meals? Are you eating too much before bed? Are you more likely to grab something unhealthy because you're in a rush? Whatever your habits are, recognizing them will allow you to make better decisions to target your problem areas.

Pay attention to who you're with and how you feel.

Acknowledging your feelings when you're documenting your food intake can sometimes result in some pretty interesting discoveries. Some people consciously or subconsciously turn to eating as a way of coping with different emotions. While anger, frustration, boredom, depression and feeling stressed are very different emotions, they are all known to encourage people to eat more. By monitoring your moods and who you're with, you may be able to identify triggers and work on ways to conquer them.

Understand your sources of calories. We all have our go-to grocery store items and rarely consider the effect they'll have on our waistline. Even 'healthy' foods can do more harm than good when not monitored properly. Your food journal will help you keep track of your ingested calories, protein, carbohydrates, fat and sugars. By having a better understanding of what you're eating, you'll be able to make healthier choices. For nutritional information about the food you're eating, check out [USDA's National Nutrient Database](#).

Re-evaluate portion sizes. With a deeper understanding of what a [balanced diet](#) looks like, you will be able to determine what your portion sizes should actually be and what they should be made up of. After a few weeks of monitoring your calories and portion sizes, your food journal will prove to be a valuable personal menu which will help keep you on track and will make meal planning easier.

Keep a fitness journal. Physical activity is important, and not just for those looking to lose weight. The more exercise you can commit to the better. However, even [30 minutes a day of moderate exercise](#) will accelerate the weight loss process and give you more energy throughout the day. A fitness journal is a great tool to help you monitor the physical activity you've done throughout the day. Your fitness journal is complementary to your food journal as it identifies the amount of calories you've burned which can be deducted from those you've ingested. Some people

choose to include their physical activity in their food journal. Do what's best for you, as long as your behaviours are accounted for.

Set goals and stay positive. It is so important to remain positive. Your food journal will be exciting at first but can eventually seem like a chore if you lose motivation which can result in you feeling pessimistic about the situation. Do something that makes you happy every day, set goals and establish rewards that will keep you inspired throughout your weight loss journey.

Hold yourself accountable. Documenting your food choices is a great start. Seeing everything you've eaten throughout the day can be eye opening. Be mindful of your eating habits, whereabouts, emotional state and physical activity and make appropriate decisions with what you're discovering. Make a plan to improve your poor decisions and reward yourself for your progress. Remember, YOU are in control.

You'll notice that by keeping a food journal, your habits will change and so will the way you look at food. Your food journal will encourage you to look at the quality of food you're eating and how they're affecting you. Once you build and maintain the habit of keeping a food journal, you will feel better internally and will soon see the results externally.

SAVE MONEY

Saving money can sometimes be more about awareness than willpower. An important part of any savings plan is documenting where your money goes. Writing down all your expenses from your morning latte to your child's tuition will provide you with deeper insight into your spending habits and as a result you will be less inclined to spend frivolously.

Make a list of your monthly expenses. Create a template or [download](#) ours.

Track your spending daily. Keep your receipts and tally them daily. Recording your spending doesn't have to be complex. Keep your journal

simple by having two columns, 1) Type of expense 2) Cost, and a daily total at the bottom.

Be honest. We sometimes have a tendency to omit the things we don't want to remember. That won't fly in your financial journal. Honestly recording and accounting for every penny is fundamental to your savings plan.

Be consistent. Perhaps the most important part about your financial journal is the consistency. It is recommended to document your spending every day for at least a month to get an accurate assessment of your spending habits, trends and monthly expenses. The longer you maintain your financial journal and the more consistent you are with your entries, the more control you will have over your finances.

Cut out unnecessary expenses. It won't be long before you're able to identify some unnecessary expenses in your financial journal. Work on eliminating those expenses and either reallocate the money you're spending on needless things to your debt or savings.

Allow some room for fun. We don't want you to restrict your spending to mandatory expenses only. We encourage you to just be realistic about what your remaining budget once those expenses are accounted for. Try to leave room in your budget for entertainment so you are aware of how much you can play with each week.

Get inspired. Keeping a financial journal can be eye opening and might be difficult to come to terms with at times. Remember that it's for a greater good and surround yourself with others who are budget-conscious. Check out New York Times' story about the weekly spending habits of 6 New Yorkers to get in the mood for saving.

Facing the reality of your spending habits can be scary but keeping a financial journal puts you in control of your finances and helps prepare for a more fruitful future.

SPEND MORE TIME WITH FAMILY

Perhaps you want to spend more time with your spouse, be around more for the kids, document special moments or learn to appreciate being in the present. Journaling is a valuable tool to help strengthen your family relationships and can assist you with creating an action plan for the improvements you wish to enforce.

Tell your family story. Important pieces of family history are found in written recollections. By documenting your story you are adding a branch to your family tree. Journaling preserves your family's story and allows current and future generations to bond over memories. Get the family involved and have them contribute their part to the story.

Share your wisdom. Journaling is an excellent tool to make your stream of consciousness tangible. It allows you to get everything out of your head and onto the page. Journaling is the doorway to your inner wisdom and provides insight on yourself and those around you. While you do not have to share your journals, you can share your learnings with your family to strengthen those relationships

Swap journals. Journaling is often an activity enjoyed alone and has proven to be a great way to communicate with yourself. It helps us translate the inner workings of our concerns, worries, preoccupations, hopes and dreams but not all journals need to remain private. If you're having a tough time articulating yourself regarding your relationship or child's behaviour, consider writing separate journals with your spouse and swapping them to facilitate the conversation. This can improve your communication and allow you to get your thoughts acknowledged without getting sidetracked by the conversation.

Organize your thoughts and emotions. There are a million things that happen in any given day. We schedule our days, organize our tasks and projects and keep track of what still needs to be accomplished, why should our thoughts and emotions be any different? Journaling helps you

disconnect for the chaos and refocus on yourself. Find a system that works for you, whether it's checking in with your journal in point form, well-constructed sentences or one-word notes. Ditch the idea of perfection, your journal is not meant to be your memoir. Your journal is a place to unload what you're thinking and how you're feeling in hopes of helping you through your day. A clear thought process enables you to make the most out of your day and your time with loved ones.

Unburden yourself. Stress holds us back and can prevent us from taking the necessary steps to make a positive change. Journaling helps you clearly see the emotional investment you have in your daily choices. Reflecting on your entries will put your life in perspective and teach you to manage your stress, acknowledge the stress that passes over time and be better focused on the things that matter most. By having a better handle on your thoughts and emotions you will be more equipped to deal with potentially stressful family matters.

Acknowledge your dreams, goals and aspirations. Sure, it's great to write about far-fetched ideas like visiting the moon but wouldn't it be great to actually accomplish the goals you set out for yourself? Journaling is effective in helping you create a map that leads you to your goal(s). Often times people will write five-year and ten-year goal journals, complete with the necessary steps to get them there. Keeping a goal journal encourages you to keep at it and to dream bigger. Involve your family in your goal journal and let them help you get to where you want to be.

Almost all of the personal benefits to journaling can translate to your family life as well. The more you learn about yourself, the more you'll be able to share yourself with those you love.

BE BETTER ORGANIZED

We talked about the importance of organizing your thoughts and emotions, how about keeping a journal to help you stay organized in general this year? Keeping an organization journal just makes things easy! Your productivity will skyrocket once you see the big picture and have a plan to make it happen.

Create a mind map. A mind map represents your thoughts, ideas and concepts. It allows you to structure your thoughts and relevant information. It helps you to better understand where you're at and analyse the missing links that are needed to get you to where you want to go. Spend some time brainstorming, you will see that your mind map will spark new ideas and concepts, embrace them – they're all part of the journey. With JRNL, you can do this in the form of an electronic list or upload an image of your hand-drawn mind map.

Identify your tasks. Now that the clutter within your brain has been projected onto a page, you can identify the tasks you will need to accomplish to help you achieve success. For example, if you want a new job, identify what is needed to get your foot in the door (i.e.: refresh your resume, distribute it, network, schedule interviews, etc.)

Prioritize. Once you know what needs to be done, establish what you need to accomplish first in order to get to the next step of your plan. Prioritizing your tasks will serve as stepping stones to get you to the finish line and as a result you will feel less overwhelmed.

Set goals. Prioritizing your tasks gives you an idea of where you want to go and how you plan to get there, creating goals will help you commit to your desired result. Goal setting is a powerful process that turns the idea of your ideal future into a reality. Journaling your goals will keep you motivated throughout the process and prevent you from drifting. Document specifically what your goal is, what success means to you, how you will take action, what the reward is and when you want to accomplish it.

Take action. Own your goals. Setting them is a great step, but it's only half the battle. You need to take action to make it happen. Record your progress and exercise self-discipline. There will be bumps along the way, but you can and will find ways to overcome them. Your goal journal will inevitably tap into your problem solving abilities that will be useful in other areas of your life.

Revise. Your goals can and will change, and that's okay. By revising your progress and your overall goal(s) on a regular basis you are making sure that they are still relevant to you. If your goals are still relevant you can fine tune your strategy. However, if you need to go back to the drawing board and devise a new plan altogether do not be discouraged. Find peace of mind that you have identified what you want and create another plan to get it.

Consider making performance goals in addition to outcome goals.

It can be quite disheartening to fail to achieve a personal goal for reasons that are beyond your control. Avoid the self-deprecating thoughts by setting goals over which you have as much control as possible.

Professionally, uncontrollable circumstances could be bad business environments or unexpected changes to the work flow. In sports such circumstances could be poor weather, injury, or just bad luck.

By setting goals on personal performance, you can keep control over the achievement of your goals, and draw satisfaction from them through every step of the process.

BE HAPPIER

Don't worry, be happy. All it takes is 5 minutes a day to rewire your brain to start living a happier life. We have a natural tendency to seek negativity in our daily lives, whether consciously or subconsciously. By practicing positivity and actively making time to appreciate the things that make us happy, we train our brains to think positively and ultimately happier thoughts. The truth is, that's easier said than done. Keeping a journal to achieve a happier life helps to turn this nice idea into an action plan.

Cultivate gratitude. There is so much to be grateful for if you take the time to see it. By acknowledging and expressing gratitude we become nicer, more trusting, more social, we begin to have a higher sense of self-worth and become happier people overall. Creating a gratitude journal makes it easy to keep track of what you're grateful for and how it makes you feel. All it takes is one sentence; "Today I am grateful for laughing with my father, I cherish these happy moments.

Embrace relaxation. Our lives are often scheduled from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to bed. Setting time aside to dedicate to your journal forces you to unplug from the chaos of life and recharge. Writing is a relaxing activity in itself so just by opening your journal and jotting down a few thoughts you're off to a good start.

Reduce stress. A happy mind can still get stressed but it has the ability to cope much easier. Writing about painful emotions help release the intense hold they have on you. Journaling contributes to a calmer and more present state of mind. It also organizes your thoughts in a way that facilitates your problem-solving abilities, eliminating the need to stress if a similar circumstance arises in the future.

Learn how to cope with negativity. When you are happy you are less likely to hang on to emotions like anger, jealousy, fear and greed. Documenting and reflecting on patterns that trigger these emotions will help

you navigate through your thought process and avoid them in the future. Acknowledging your negative behavior and/or responses, consciously changing them, tracking your progress and seeing positive results will make an optimistic believer out of any pessimist.

Foster forgiveness. Being happy triggers other positive emotions, forgiveness being one of them. Reflecting on all that you are grateful for will make everything else seem secondary and you will begin to let go and forgive yourself and others' their shortcomings.

Feel empowered. In the words of philosopher and psychologist, William James, "If you can change your mind, you can change your life". Documenting your daily events and their accompanying thoughts and emotions allow you to have a deeper understanding of your experiences and find lessons in them.

Your journal is an incredible resource to remind yourself that you are the author of your own life story and you have the power to make it one worth telling. A happier and more fulfilling life is possible with a gratitude journal.

THE STATS

45% of Americans set new goals at the beginning of every year but only 8% successfully achieve them.

39% of those in their twenties achieve them each year.

14% of those over 55 achieve them each year.

This begs the question, why is there a higher success rate among a younger demographic? The answer is two-fold.

1) The goals you set in your twenties are often easier to achieve.

Common goals are:

- Smile more
- Work out
- Start a side project
- Don't take myself too seriously
- Travel

As you get older and responsibilities set in, your goals turn into wishful thinking and can seem unattainable at times.

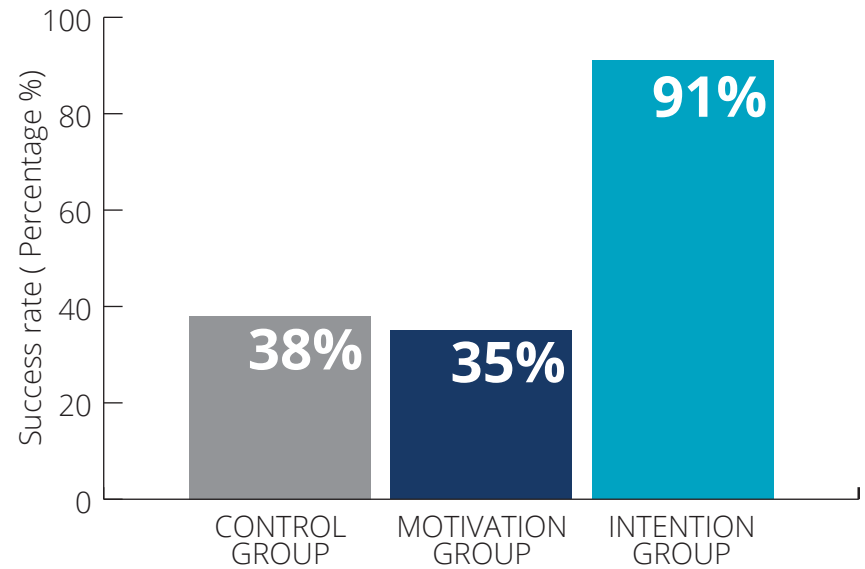
2) People in their twenties are more likely to write about their experience, whether it's on social media, in a blog post or a personal journal. Therein lies the secret.

In a study published by *British Journal of Health Psychology*, shows the incredible correlation between documenting your goals and achieving them. Researchers measured how frequently 248 adults exercised over a two week period. They were assigned to three groups:

- 1) **Control Group.** They were instructed to keep track of how frequently they exercised over the next two weeks and were asked to read three paragraphs of an unrelated novel before they left the meeting.
- 2) **Motivation Group.** They were also instructed to keep track of how frequently they exercised over the next two weeks. Additionally, each person read a pamphlet on the benefits of exercise in relation to reducing the risk of heart disease. They were told “Most young adults who have stuck to a regular exercise program have found it to be very effective in reducing their chances of developing coronary heart disease.” The purpose of this was to motivate the group to exercise regularly.
- 3) **Intention Group.** They were also instructed to track their exercise, they read the same pamphlet and got the same speech as the Motivation Group. Both the Motivation Group and the Intention Group were equally motivated. The main difference being that they were asked to formulate a plan identifying their intention of when and where they would exercise over the next week. Specifically, each person in Intention Group was asked to explicitly state their intention to exercise by completing the following statement, “During the next week, I will partake in at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise on [DAY] at [TIME OF DAY] at/in [PLACE].”

The Results

MOTIVATION VS. INTENTION



Researchers made a surprising discovery.

In the **Control Group**, 38% of participants exercised at least once per week.

In the **Motivation Group**, 35% of participants exercised at least once per week.

In the **Intention Group**, a staggering 91% of participants exercised at least once per week.

By writing down a plan that said exactly when and where they intended to exercise, the participants in the Intention Group were significantly more likely to follow through and achieve their goal.

CONCLUSION

Motivation is important but that alone will not get you results. As the research suggests, what turns motivation into action is a plan. By deciding when, where and how you are going to implement your goals, they have the ability to come to life. Consider these results when setting your personal goals. This discovery is not exclusive to exercise goals and can be applied to any goal you wish to achieve.

We are what we repeatedly do. Whatever your goal is, consistency and documenting progress are two key factors to achieving success. JRNL is your tool that will help you identify your goals and stick to them.

Don't wait, sign up to JRNL for free today and make 2016 your best year yet!