

Alaska Strength & Muscle July Challenge

"Exercising a Strong Foundation"



You will need – Computer or Paper (depending on your preference for bookkeeping) and receipts.

Pick a 20/30-minute time slot after dinner that you would normally be watching TV, Social Networking or needlessly snacking. Determine spending areas you want to track/analyze. Ex. Transportation, dining out, clothing, groceries etc are allotted spending areas with some flexibility. Set a time period for tracking -This can be a month or if you save receipts you can

analyze multiple months. Repeat every other day until spending spreadsheet is complete- Goal to complete this portion of the challenge is Day 20. Bring the family in for help if needed!

On day 20 share analysis with family over dinner and discuss ways to make changes if necessary - maybe you really want a new pair of running shoes and can figure out a way to save \$10 weekly until the price of the shoes are met. What a great opportunity to talk finances, teach and reinforce attaining long term goals, and remind ourselves that we are in the drivers seat of our own spending habits. I know I learned a few things and was surprised by some spending habits too.

Strength Challenge

Week 1-2

20 Squats

30 lunges

50-second wall sit

100 jumping jacks

40 sumo squats

40 leg raises

Week 3-4

Repeat cycle twice

Do this 3-5 times a week

Pick a time, could be first thing in the morning, during a commercial break, lunch break etc. - Stick to it all month.



"Exercising a Strong Foundation" By MB Redington, MAT

A **foundation** is the lowest and supporting layer of structure. A strong base can carry a heavy load safely. Our homes need a strong foundation and so does our body and family. Strong legs/glutes are critical to sustaining a healthy and sturdy physical base while finances serve as one foundation for meeting needs in daily family life. We can shape and re-shape both our physical and financial foundation anytime necessary so lets make it this months' challenge.

July is a great time to review habits to determine if change is necessary. July marks half way through the year. Enough time has passed to examine habits set in the first half of the year, acknowledge good habits already in place, and address areas that need further improvement.

For me July is a great time to analyze the family budget, so I did an 18-month study. This was not a huge stretch with my personal record keeping style but it did take time- so set your goal high but be realistic too. Personally I looked at categories like groceries, fuel, snacks, and eating out to name a few. I was pleasantly surprised at how consistent our food bill is both monthly and annually. That reinforced to me that we have really spent time learning how to shop wisely - which we have been working on with gusto. An area though that really surprised me though was our use of fuel. One of my favorite complaints is that we never go anywhere. Well, although we have cut down driving a lot - the bills tell a slightly different story. This disconnect is huge to

acknowledge and a great discussion point for the family. Not only does it provide a platform to talk about spending but the bigger picture of our families current carbon footprint and whether or not we want to make changes. This year I am saving 100's by not turning on my Mustang. In some ways it's been a major bummer, as I love my supercharged V-8. It was my gift to self for quitting smoking. In other ways I know I've actually cut down on fuel instead of just thinking I was - Yes I found out there is a difference. Also it's an ace in the whole to help pay college credits which may become a much greater reward than a token of an ex-smoker. It's great for kids to participate in these conversations and depending on age the level and type of interaction can vary greatly. But these simple acts become profound both done and left undone.

The majority of us have all been feeling this economic crunch for several years now. It can become very heavy and burdensome to constantly be stretching every penny every day. When given the chance to gain the upper hand on stress I try to raise to the occasion the best I can. To address this stressor I went ahead and took another step related to financial control. I made up a spreadsheet for myself of activities and prices (free, \$5 and under, \$10 and under etc. & 30min & under, 60 min & under etc). Things like take a home spa bath, go to the library, walk the dogs, cook a great meal, go out for a latte, buy a magazine, have a massage. Again I was surprised by how many affordable/free things I do enjoy doing (part of the satisfaction is the price). Also my budget tells me there are a lot of mindless 'treats' I get without really acknowledging, again pointing out some disconnect.

What I learned - most of me already knew - That I live a wonderfully blessed life with opportunity galore and I even have room to afford "treating myself".

