

## POLITICS AS USUAL: Happy 2018 everyone!

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

I hope you had a lovely holiday and a welcome break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

As we look forward to this New Year, I am sure many of us have made some resolutions (and others wisely eschew such things knowing how hard they are to keep).

I have been challenged by a rowing friend to give up sugar, alcohol and engage in 365 days of fitness. Its day two (as I am writing this) and so far so good...remaining cookies have been tossed out, there is no prosecco left in the house and I have started my winter training program in earnest. So, a good start.

Just as an FYI - the alcohol and sugar challenge is a 30 day cleanse, by the way...not an entire year! I could give up cookies easily as I only eat them at Christmas and Easter (so I guess giving them up is kind of cheating given that I wouldn't be eating them anyway...). But prosecco? Not so much. It is the only drink that I like and celebrations would be pretty crummy if I couldn't have a glass of Prosecco. So, a thirty day moratorium on all fancy alcoholic fizzy drinks will have to suffice.

The workouts are another matter entirely. I have a training program that I follow that takes me right through to the on water rowing season. I have done a version of this program for literally 20 years or so. It's usually about 5 days a week of various workouts. But there are times when you get a bit sick of it and slack off for a day or two ? especially if you go away on a holiday or when you have to do multiple long distance ergs. (60 ? 90 minute ergs are truly awful when you have to do them alone. Yuck!) So a 365 day challenge keeps you on track.

There's something about crossing off a list of tasks (in this case days of workouts) that is immensely satisfying. You can see your progress both literally and figuratively.

Of course, having people to whom you have to be accountable certainly helps when taking on these challenges. As I said, I have friends from rowing who are doing this ? and are accountable for it online via facebook. So, skipping a workout isn't really an option. The fear of public shaming is enough to make you keep going. Well, it is for me at least.

I am not usually a fan of these type of things as radical changes are rarely long lasting. Incremental change is usually the best route to take when working towards personal growth. But that's the beauty of the 365 day fitness challenge: It gives you a measurable ? and achievable ? goal for every day of the year. It doesn't have to be daily marathons either. It can be long walks in the woods. A bike ride. Skating at the park. A yoga class. Anything physical really as long as you're moving.

Given how much time we all spend sitting ? at our jobs, commuting, leisure ? getting ourselves moving everyday is a worthwhile goal.

So happy 2018 everyone. I hope it's a great one!