

Juggling Life

by Chris Dixon, M.Ed.

I recently picked up a book, *“Lessons from the Art of Juggling”* by Michael Gelb and Tony Buzan. The book teaches some valuable life lessons, while simultaneously teaching the art of juggling. The skills required to learn to juggle are similar to the skills required to manage fitness. Keeping balls in the air while gravity is working against you is a unique challenge. Managing health is equally challenging. Like juggling, learning key techniques can help you stay focused on fitness and keep all of life’s balls in the air.

Here are a few key lessons from learning to juggle that can be applied to the maintenance of health and fitness:

- **Drop the ball:** No one has ever successfully learned to juggle without dropping the balls at some point. In fact, dropping the balls is part of the learning process. You learn to juggle by dropping the balls. Fitness is the same. You will get busy, become ill, or lack motivation at times. Life throws us off-

track and we drop the ball. Juggling requires you to become comfortable dropping the balls. The goal of the juggler is to pick the balls up and keep trying. What can seem like failure is really the process of learning. Ah-ha!

- **Practice:** Those who can juggle will tell you it took hours of practice. This is the work necessary to juggle. Your fitness goals require you to “practice” exercising and being healthy. The more you practice the closer you get to your goal. Each day you should spend time practicing your healthy habits.
- **Progress:** Catching and tossing one ball is not extremely difficult. Once you master tossing and catching a single ball, you move to two, then three balls. Similarly, your exercise training should progress as well. If you walk a certain distance regularly, it may be beneficial to extend your distance and/or decrease your time to cover the distance. Progressing in fitness requires pushing yourself to do

more than what you think you're capable. It's not really juggling until you have more balls in the air than you have hands.

Learning to juggle reminded me humans are capable of learning new skills at any time. Managing health and fitness in today's society is a challenge. Many times, we juggle time, finances and other commitments that challenge us to keep the ball of fitness in the air. It's possible you may drop the ball from time to time. If you get frustrated, remember the lessons of juggling to get you back on track.

