

# Better Homes and Gardens

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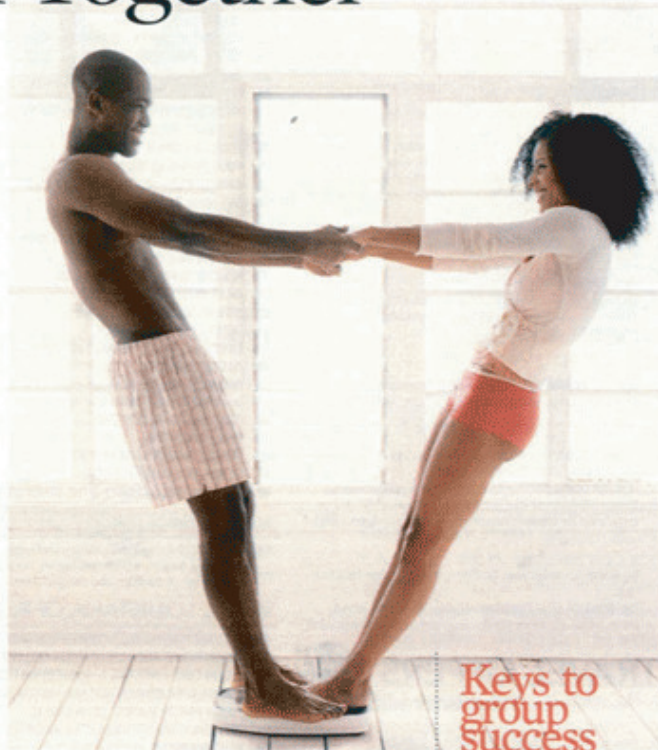
HEALTH **better**

## Take It Off Together

Too often, self-improvement puts too much emphasis on “self.” Shed more weight and keep it off using team spirit.

by DAVID FEDER, R.D.

**AFTER THE LAST OF HER FOUR DAUGHTERS WAS BORN, THERESA TUROK EXPERIENCED** a decade of frustration in her attempts to get fit. The 42-year-old nurse in Buffalo Grove, Illinois, worked out inconsistently, then noticed that her daughters were getting overweight, too. A few years ago, Theresa decided to turn their basement into an obstacle course. “I had the girls join me downstairs for ‘boot camp’ and we had so much fun, we worked out harder than we ever had before,” she says. Since Theresa and her daughters, now ages 9 through 16, started their fitness journey together, they’ve lost more than 70 pounds as a group and have added vigorous outdoor runs and bike rides to the family routine. “The most important accomplishment was not the weight loss but the empowerment,” says Theresa. “The time I’ve spent with my girls helping them to love their bodies and value themselves has been the greatest achievement.”



### Keys to group success

Follow these strategies for working out with a partner or group from Jessica Matthews, continuing education coordinator for the American Council on Exercise.

- ▶ Choose activities you all will enjoy.
- ▶ Select times and days for exercise that are convenient for all group members.
- ▶ Set short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the team and members.
- ▶ Set goals that can be evaluated and measured; for example, body weight, waist size, timed walks.
- ▶ Choose a reward system that reflects your group's personality. Implement it each time you reach a milestone.

Theresa's experience mirrors what fitness science has started to confirm. A recent study at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine divided 166 subjects into individuals and groups of four friends or family members. About three out of four solo-goers completed the test program, but few were able to maintain weight loss after a 10-month follow-up. Nearly all of the teams completed the program and two-thirds maintained their weight loss in full.

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#### LOSE WEIGHT, GAIN HEALTH

NEXT MONTH: ADD TO SUBTRACT. One of the best ways to take off weight is to add more to your life, not take more away. Learn how to use this surprising truth in November's issue.