



# The “Roll” of the Principal

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Much has been written on developing learning communities, improving leadership skills, being data-driven in decision making and on the legal responsibilities of a principal, but what about the “roll” of the principal? We work with teachers to help them create and achieve goals in their annual learning plans, but what about our own annual “health” plan? Here are three “rolls” that have worked for me in my position as principal. They are so important to me that I encourage you to make time for them.

## *Roll #1*

**Roll out of bed in the morning and workout.**

You are probably thinking that you do not have time for this or that it sounds like too much work. Your day planner or PDA flashes before your mind and you say that it is impossible to fit in one more thing. It is possible and I encourage you to get started. Where do you start? No matter what your age, check with your doctor to tell him/her what you are planning. I suggest you do the following. Start with weight-lifting as this helps increase your muscle size and bone density and burns calories longer during the day than just doing cardio exercises. It is not necessary to pump huge amounts of weights; just start light. Get into a routine, buy some dumbbells and read a few books or magazines on health. There are hundreds of books with many routines you can choose from. Once you get going, add some cardio exercises. After some soreness and increase in strength, you will start to think about eating better and trying healthier foods. The general rules are: eat small meals every two to three hours instead of one big meal, have protein with every meal and drink lots of water. Do not skip meals and try not to eat junk food in the evening. Trust me, it will take some months to get going but the results will be worth it. You have to find a plan that works for you and one that you can live with forever.

One key activity that principals are good at is documenting everything in their day. If you want exercising to work, I suggest you make a chart and track your progress. Write down how much weight you can lift today for three sets of ten repetitions for a given body part. Track your improvement and you will be motivated. Setting goals and tracking your progress is essential for improvement. You already know this as a principal or vice-principal.

Since your days and nights are usually booked, you must find a time to workout. You should workout regularly to notice success. I recommend you workout first thing in the morning. This is the best time of day to lose weight, just before you eat anything. Try to train at least four times a week.

## *Roll #2*

**Apply your exercise to something you can do with your family or friends.**

I began Martial Arts almost five years ago. My two children are now in Martial Arts as well, so this is our family experience together. Learn with them. The best part of this cardio activity is that it is very exciting and many people are there to motivate you. Believe me, I can do more now than twenty years ago, especially my rolls, kicks, punches and break-falls.

## *Roll #3*

**Rock’n roll**

Every week my wife and I attend ballroom dancing classes. This is our fun time together. Invite a friend or go alone. You will meet great people there too. This is another way to apply the weight training and cardio exercises you have been doing.

This is by far the best advice I would like to share with my colleagues. You will find that you will become stronger, healthier, less stressed and will have no problem sleeping. I know working out regularly sounds like a chore but you can do it at any age. My wife, who is a secondary school teacher, uses the same program. To clarify, we are not huge muscular bodybuilders but we are in the best shape of our lives. These three “rolls” work for me with a busy principal’s schedule. I make time for these activities because my family, my spiritual life and my health are the most important things to me. If I am not healthy, I will not be there for my family and my community. I feel that I am a better principal because of these three rolls.

**Don't wait: workout tomorrow!**

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