

# Doing the Countdown to Your Best Body with a Group

## Make the most of the Countdown with:

- your coworkers or worksite wellness group
- local gym members
- your singles group
- your local Mom's Club, preschool classroom moms or PTO
- your sports team or your kids' team parents
- your supper club
- your church during a church-wide health stewardship campaign
- your Sunday School class, Small Group, or Bible Study group
- a group of your family and friends

## 4 Steps to Success

1. Look through your calendar for a good time to run this program for 52 consecutive days with your group. You'll need a couple of weeks to get the Success Journals ordered. Below are some suggestions to consider for starting dates:
  - mid-January, making the most of the start of a New Year
  - 8 weeks prior to your local Spring Break
  - two weeks after Spring Break
  - two weeks after school starts in the fall
  - anytime your prospective group members are interested in weight loss or getting healthy
2. Begin taking registrations and payment for the Success Journal as soon as you start advertising your program so that you can order your books. There is a step-by-step promotional guide in this Appendix.
3. Order your books from [bestbodyin52.com](http://bestbodyin52.com) if greater than 25 (or via [www.CreateSpace.com/4466992](http://www.CreateSpace.com/4466992) if less than 25). Hold a "Countdown Kick-Off" the week before the 52-day Countdown begins, with plans in place to begin Day 52's challenges on the following Tuesday. At the Countdown Kick-Off:
  - take final registrations (download registration form online)
  - give participants their Success Journals and take payment
  - get T-shirt sizes and payment if T-shirts are desired\*
  - do fitness assessments
  - do weight/measurements
  - take "before photos"
4. If you start on a Tuesday, the program will end on a Thursday, 52 days later. Plan a simple wrap-up one or two days after the Countdown is complete (that Friday or Saturday, depending on the availability of your participants)
  - do final assessments to assess progress
  - take "after photos"

optional: host a healthy potluck/recipe swap and awards ceremony called the “Countdown Completion”

## 5. Support

There are varying levels of support and accountability that you, as the coordinator of your Countdown, can provide to increase success. Read on for my suggestions, all of which offer touchpoints and encourage retention.

### **Camaraderie**

- Create a Facebook “Group” for those who are participating where they can encourage each other, post their before and after photos, and post photos of their balanced plate at meals.
- \*If you would like to order T-shirts (25 minimum per order), please get sizes and payment from participants upon registration. To order, contact me via [bestbodyin52.com](http://bestbodyin52.com).
- Be sure to schedule a group photo with everyone in their T-shirts. Midway through the program is a great time for this!

### **Opportunity**

- Arrange for a weekly get-together where people can share their successes and barriers to completing the week’s Countdown challenges. This is also a good place to offer a weekly weigh-in. (Weight charts can be downloaded from [bestbodyin52.com](http://bestbodyin52.com)). Ideally, set this up when participants can be active together as a group. Suggestions include a weekly run/walk, hike, group exercise class or DVD, or Boot Camp.
- If you already have a class scheduled, meet 15 minutes early for a brief time of discussion regarding the Countdown challenges from that week.
- Consider hosting a yoga/stretch class (live or via DVD) on the scheduled rest days. If you start on a Tuesday, rest days will fall on Wednesdays and Sundays.
- Encourage all participants to sign up for a local 5K to do together during the 52 days.
- Decide with the help of the “Winners” guide below if/how you want to reward the “Winners.”

### **Accountability**

- Have a location where they can “turn in” to you the following 10 “Best Body Ticket Challenges” (or they can post these on your Facebook page to inspire others). As the coordinator of the Countdown, you can either collect all of the following “Best Body Ticket Challenges,” or just pick 3-5 of these that are varied and well-spaced over the 52 days.

Place a ticket with the participant’s name for each of the following tasks he/she completes into a box or jar for a drawing at the end of the Countdown. Remind them that they must have their names on these documents and on the ticket.

### **Best Body Ticket Challenges**

- 1) Day 48, 47, and 46’s printed food log with name at the top (turn in all 3 days’ food records on Day 45)
- 2) Day 42’s journaled self assessment (make a copy or post photographed text)
- 3) Day 34’s printed food log with name written at the top
- 4) Day 28’s menu for the week
- 5) Day 23’s questions answered as to which strategies they credit
- 6) Day 19’s questions answered about a “new you”
- 7) Day 14’s two-week meal plan

- 8) Day 7's printed food log with name written at the top
- 9) Day 3's plan to continue successfully
- 10) Exercise check-off chart from the entire program (Appendix D)

## “Winners”

All who stick with the Countdown for 52 days should be applauded. If you decide you want to have an incentive for those who do especially well in this challenge, please find my recommendations below.

The assessment to determine who wins should not be based primarily on weight loss. Keep in mind that not everyone working to achieve their Best Body needs to lose weight (for instance, some want to gain muscle, or change their eating habits, but to maintain their weight). I suggest that a “ticket” is put in a “hat” for each of those above (1-10) once turned in to you or posted. (See website for downloadable “ticket” image). On the day of the Countdown Completion, hold a raffle. Those who complete most of the aforementioned tasks, will have the most tickets in the “hat,” and thus the greatest chance of winning the prize(s) of the final drawing. (If only a few people complete all 10, consider giving those participants each a reward if possible.)

Prizes should promote wellness. Suggestions include:

- gift card to a sports gear store
- gift card for a massage
- a new iPod
- iTunes gift card
- 3 or 6 month membership to a fitness facility or program
- a session with a personal trainer
- a consult with a registered dietitian
- a “Best Body Gift Basket” with all of the above!

If it is not an option to give one of the “prize” items above, consider charging \$5 more than the Success Journal price for your Countdown program in order to create a fund from which to purchase prizes.

## Promotion Timeline:

### 4-8 weeks out:

- Send out Facebook and email “teasers” to promote program awareness.
- Download and post fliers and posters from [bestbodyin52.com](http://bestbodyin52.com).
- If applicable, meet with staff, personal trainers, and instructors to prepare for the promotion of the Countdown. Brainstorm what you could provide for staff as incentives for their participation.
- Consider hosting a Boot Camp 2-3 days a week during the program, and perhaps offer a special rate (“Buy One Get One”) for the first 20 or more to sign up. Advertise the program.
- Set up registration and payment options. Go for online registration and payment if possible (include a question prompt about T-shirt size if these will be offered). Reminder: the registration form can be downloaded from [bestbodyin52.com](http://bestbodyin52.com).
- Educate staff about the program details.

### **6 weeks out, and 4 weeks out:**

- Media promotion (email, Facebook, website, radio, newspaper, flyers)
- Go through the “Support” suggestions listed above and set up those that you are planning to implement.

### **2 weeks out:**

- Send out both email and Facebook reminders regarding ongoing registration, and to remind participants of the Kick-Off day and time so they can be prepared to purchase their Success Journals if they have not yet done so over the registration period (and T-shirt if desired).
- Order your books two weeks from the time that you need them via [bestbodyin52.com](http://bestbodyin52.com) if greater than 25 (or via [www.CreateSpace.com/4466992](http://www.CreateSpace.com/4466992) if less than 25).

### **1 week out:**

- Send out the email and Facebook reminders again and reach out to those that have registered.
- Host your Countdown Kick-Off and take final registrations.
- Order any final books that you may need.

### **1 day before the Countdown begins:**

- The week or day before the 52 day Countdown begins, host your Countdown Kick-Off. Set up a table and offer fruit, water bottles, and coffee in your lobby (if applicable). At the Kick-Off:
  - take registration
  - take payment and give participants their Success Journals
  - get T-shirt sizes and payment for these (if applicable)
  - do fitness assessments
  - take weight/measurements
  - take “before photos”

### **Throughout the Countdown:**

- Encourage participants at intervals during the Countdown via email and Facebook.
- Send out reminders about the Best Body Tickets.

### **At the end of the Countdown**, ideally at your Countdown Completion Celebration:

- Do final assessments to assess progress.
- Take “after photos.”
- Hold the Best Body Ticket drawing and offer awards.
- Announce the date of your next Countdown, if applicable.