

LOOK

Carole Caplin, celebrity trainer and life coach, says New Year resolutions can be made to last...

if you want to -take it easy

In the same way we probably felt obliged to cook turkey on Christmas Day, come the New Year, we feel we must make resolutions. But how on earth do we do it in such a way that it lasts longer than last year, and the year before, and the year before.

Amid the emotional, financial and festive debris, there's an overwhelming pressure to spend the money we know we haven't got and join a gym. Of course, this is brilliant (I run a health club, so I am a bit biased) but if you do sign up, do it for the right reasons, and make sure you are individually supported, so you get the benefit, and it lasts.

So what's the alternative? How about facing up to the fact that this cold, wet, anti-climax time of year is absolutely the worst time to be attempting to make big changes.

My advice is to take it easy. Instead of cranking up your social calendar and running around the park at 6am on a freezing Sunday morning, make now when you have some space and quality time, quietly, with just you. Early nights, afternoon naps on the weekends; in other words sleep and lots of it. If you can, eat three regular meals a day and treat yourself to nourishing homemade soups and stews that our bodies want at this time of year.

Drink loads of water to keep your energy up and hydrate your skin in the overheated indoor air. And wrap up warmly for long walks at your own pace – it's a wonderful way to think, to really consider the way forward that makes sense for you.

To honestly make changes and sustain them, you have to get to know what's going on with your body. How can you do that if you don't spend time with yourself?

Do this and you are more likely to end up with some specific goals that not only will you want to achieve but, because you will have arrived at them through an internal process, you will actually succeed in.

If you make the right choices, you will find yourself healthier and even shedding excess weight. The key to lasting success is subtle but fundamental changes to your lifestyle, and nothing dramatic.

TWO TIPS FOR PLANNING ahead to more formal exercise:

Maintain staying power:

Stay hydrated by drinking the recommended amount of still water for your weight and output. Eat correctly at the right times. Get enough sleep and have sensible rest periods between any training sessions. These are the foundations for avoiding burn out and for sustaining energy levels and consistent progress.

Stay focused: Identify realistic and therefore achievable goals, rather than ones based on an idealised view of yourself or what you might like to see in the mirror. When you start out, pace yourself and listen to your body. Becoming unfit and overweight doesn't happen overnight, so do not expect instant results.



The contributor

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get fit



Detox made easy!

It's the right time of year for gentle detoxing. No need to go hard at it. Here's how...

Take seaweed

Posh reportedly drinks it in shakes, Alicia Silverstone praises it in her *Kind Diet* book and it's even in Brad Pitt's shaving gel. Seaweed has amazing benefits for hair, skin and health, and sustainably sourced seaweed capsules are a great detox aid. Oceans of Goodness says Seagreens® help remove toxins from the body that have been absorbed over time through (even an organic) diet and the environment. Harmful chemicals and heavy metals are literally escorted out of the body for good.



Eat Low GI Pasta

Give your body a break from stodgy carbs but keep eating your favourite foods;

go for low GI. Glycemic Index is a measure of the speed at which carbohydrates in food are digested and absorbed as glucose. Low GI foods give you a slower and more constant energy release. Dreamfields, which has pastas with 65% lower GI than regular pasta, says eating these foods rather than traditional white or whole wheat pasta, can help to manage weight as you feel fuller faster and for longer.

Drink artichoke tea!

Artichokes help improve digestion and liver function by increasing bile flow so more fat is digested more easily. Symptoms such as bloating, flatulence, stomach ache and constipation can be alleviated. Natur Boutique says artichoke tea works so well because it improves bile secretion, helping remove toxins from the liver after the festive season's excess. And if you are still inclined to fatty foods and alcohol, artichoke tea will help your body tolerate that too.

Follow these tips

To support your body in gently detoxing, Patch-It, from Nature's Dream, has these detox tips for us:

- ♥ Drink 8 glasses of water daily – obvious we know but how many of us actually manage it?
- ♥ Increase the proportion of fruit and vegetable intake and make sure you include a variety of colours for their varying vitamins and minerals.
- ♥ Get your circulation moving with exercise and fresh air to support your body's natural functions. Simply taking the stairs instead of the lift is a start!
- ♥ Sleep before midnight if possible – Chinese medicine believes that the body cleanses best between midnight and 2am.