

8 TIPS

for a Successful New Year

Are you planning a fresh start in 2015? Are you going to eat more healthily, exercise regularly or lose weight? Statistics vary, but most estimates put the success rate for New Year's resolutions at around 10%. That's a depressing 9 in 10 chance of failure. So how can you make sure you're one of the successful 10% this year?



JOANNE HENSON, author of 'What's Your Excuse For Not Getting Fit?' and 'What's Your Excuse For Not Eating Healthily?' gives us some key tips to ensure New Year's resolution success...

SET SPECIFIC TARGETS

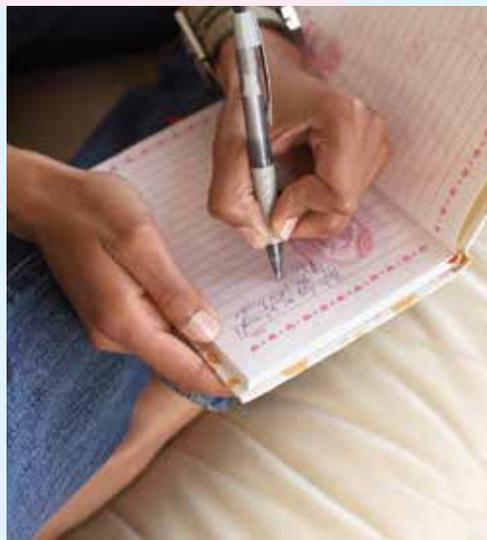
Want to lose weight? How much? Want to get fitter? How much fitter? In three/six/twelve months' time, what do you want to be able to do? Write it down and give yourself a date for reaching your target. Without a deadline you'll drift.

GET ORGANISED

Without planning, things go awry. For example: you want to fit in three workouts per week, but you've not planned when. It's Monday and you've got that Monday feeling, so you say to yourself you'll go to the gym tomorrow. But you're meeting friends on Tuesday, which means no workout... If you'd looked ahead and diarised the workouts you'd have been sure to fit them in.

MAKE YOUR PLAN ACHIEVABLE

Ask yourself: is your goal actually possible, with the time and resources you are able and willing to dedicate to it? For instance, if you're giving yourself six weeks to lose a stone, that's going to mean pretty strict eating. Would you rather give yourself eight weeks and allow yourself a few nights out and treats along the way?



TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Think about creating a journal or spreadsheet or download an app which you can use to record progress – you may only be recording small improvements, but they're improvements nonetheless. And when your willpower is waning, looking back at the improvements you've made so far will help you stay on track.

REMEMBER THAT ONE SLIP-UP DOES NOT EQUAL TOTAL FAILURE

Don't let one slip-up turn into the end of your plans. Don't get so angry at yourself for one lapse that you forget to congratulate yourself on the success you've had up to that moment. Put that one bad day into proper perspective. Then make the next day a good one, and you'll be back on track.

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STAY FOCUSED

Coaches often say, “Begin with the end in mind” – but what is even more important is to progress with the end in mind. Focus on how great it’s going to feel when you reach your goal – the smaller size jeans, the increased energy, the compliments on how great you’re looking. It’s these thoughts that will keep you on track.

AVOID NEGATIVE LANGUAGE

Many resolutions are about giving things up, so it’s very easy to talk about them in negative terms: “I am giving up alcohol for January”. But it has a positive end – a healthier you. If you talk only about what you’re giving up, you’re bound to feel deprived. Replace negative statements with more positive ones – for instance, instead of “I’m not drinking for the whole of January” say, “I’m having a healthy January to improve my energy levels”. This shifts the focus from what you’re missing to what you’re looking forward to.

CHANGE YOUR APPROACH

If you make the same old resolution every year, this is particularly important. If something hasn’t worked for you before, it’s unlikely to work this time around. Try a new approach. What can you do differently this year? Get advice if necessary, or ask successful people how they achieved their goals. For weight loss, ditch the quick fix diets and consider other ways of eating. If you want to get fit, but start off running every year and lose interest, what other forms of exercise could you do instead?

If you adopt these strategies in 2015, you’ll have a practical and realistic plan for success. Here’s to you being in the successful 10% this year!



Joanne Henson is a health and weight-loss coach, specialising in helping people with a history of failed diets and fitness regimes to change their relationship with food and exercise for good. Go to www.joannehenson.co.uk for more info.