

the edge
 ARTS, FASHION, FOOD & MORE

Small steps lead to big results



Stick to fitness resolutions with help from experts' tips



Top Ten lists can be fun, if you're charting pop songs. But they can be trouble if you're using them for New Year's resolutions — especially fitness and weight loss promises. Give yourself a break and pick one thing to change next month. See if you can stick to it and then move on to more.

From making small changes to using social media, local experts offer their go-to piece of advice for sticking to those fitness resolutions, and staying healthy this January and beyond.

FOCUS ON WELLNESS
Erica Corsano

Kerri Axelrod, certified holistic health coach and health and wellness publicist at Marlo Marketing, Boston

"The hardest resolutions to keep are the ones that require you to drastically alter your lifestyle. If your goal is to lose weight, ask yourself why you want to lose weight. If it's to become healthier, choose one step you can take immediately to begin losing weight. Set a goal to go to the gym two to three times a week. Once you're in that rhythm, you can begin working on your diet. Perhaps one week you try eliminating dairy and see how your body reacts. The key is to go slow and be kind to yourself."

Experts give tips for keeping resolutions

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Bruce Smith, executive director of Community Rowing Inc. and medal-winning USA National Team rowing coach, Community Rowing, Boston

"Choose an exercise or physical activity that is skill-based. Have you always wanted to play tennis or swim? Sign up for a tennis or swim class and improve your technique. The mental engagement around learning a new skill will make you forget you just exercised for an hour."

Dustin Martin, co-owner of Barry's Boot Camp, Boston

"Find yourself an accountability buddy! Pick someone that has similar (realistic) goals for the new year, so that you can lean on each other when motivation starts waning after the first weeks of the new year. We all know how hard it can be to get up an hour early when extra cold outside or how that deep dish pizza is going to look after weeks of salads and healthier food choices. ... Studies show that most resolutions do not last past January, so make sure your buddy doesn't let up, and they will do the same for you."

Emily Southworth, master instructor at Recycle Studio, Boston

"Make a plan to accomplish your goal, rather than just saying a resolution. Around New Year's, so many people set a big goal for the year, and it's usually something vague like 'get in shape,' 'eat better,' 'lose weight.' Set specific goals for yourself as well as writing down (yes, pen and paper, the old-fashioned way) your plan of attack. Whether it's a weekly workout schedule, meal prep time, recipes, etc., you are more likely to stay on track and accomplish your goals if you have a foolproof plan that will keep you accountable."

Victoria Stratton, personal trainer and women's empowerment coach, Boston

"Don't rely on willpower alone. When we're tired, busy or stressed (and who isn't), our willpower diminishes, so make it as easy as possible to choose that new healthy behavior. If you're trying to get fit, eat healthier or lose weight, choose a gym close to your home or

office, make healthy meals on Sunday for the week, and pack your gym bag the night before."

Amanda Cort, owner of Newbury Street Xtend Barre Studio, Boston

"I'm a firm believer in the power of positive thinking and how life-changing it can be. Before making a New Year's resolution, be sure it aligns with your goals and the realistic outcome you desire. If you really, really want it, and believe you can make it happen, you will have the impetus and wherewithal to see it through."

Rob Hand, founder of MeetMeOutside, a dating app for outdoorsy types.

"Get outside. We encourage all MeetMeOutside users to think beyond the gym to stay active, even in the winter. Find something that's just fun and doesn't feel like exercise. Try new things until something clicks, and who knows, you could meet someone along the way who makes 2016 great."

Jess Perkins, owner and founder of Shape Up Personal Training, Cambridge

"The one thing to help you stick to your New Year's resolution would be to keep it simple by making small changes. Don't overwhelm yourself with all of the things you want to change, pick one or two and focus on those first."

For example, if weight loss is your goal ...

- Move more
- Chew your food! (Yes, get rid of the shakes and chew!)
- Drink more water
- Eat more fiber.

Julie Erickson, owner and principal teacher/personal trainer, Endurance Pilates and Yoga, Boston

"Find yourself a fit 'tribe' to help you achieve your best self possible in 2016 with positive peer pressure! That tribe can be a group that you meet for an early morning spin class or run. ... Hire a running coach, personal trainer or connect to your friends on your

Fitbit app. Your tribe should be empathetic, motivating, yet hold you positively accountable for your 2016 goals."

Cassie Brown, Xpert, BFX Studio, Back Bay

"Keep it simple and make it positive. I'm super competitive, so eating clean is like a game to me. Remember playing video games and how certain actions earn you points? When I eat something good for me, I count it as points

Focus on wellness:

Our four-part series continues:

Tomorrow: Update your workout gear for the New Year

Friday: Healthy makeover of a 'Life Time'

Saturday: Bostonians' fave fit/spa getaways



something not so great, it doesn't earn me any points. This helps me to not feel

of accomplishment when I choose something healthy rather than indulging."