



FITNESS 2017

New Year's Resolutions that Stick

by Aimee Hughes

Every January, we rally our hopes, vowing that this time our New Year's resolutions will finally stick. However, "If you don't have a plan, plan to fail," says Kansas City, Missouri, personal trainer Jake Albracht. We can make our health and fitness goals for 2017 a reality instead of just wishful thinking.

Find a good trainer. "A personal trainer provides a helpful base of knowledge because the hardest part for most people is a lack of planning and diligence in following up. Trainers can step in to help a client achieve their goals," says Albracht.

Jeanne Rankin, assistant strength and conditioning coach at the University of Kentucky, in Lexington, adds, "A personal trainer can also help you set lofty goals that you wouldn't have considered on your own due to fear of failure in achieving them."

Secure personal attention. Individual attention is invaluable. Albracht notes, "There's nothing like the instant feedback with technique, information and support that one-on-one training provides."

Rankin adds, "In ongoing individual evaluation, a personal trainer can see exactly what's going well and what

isn't, providing a better assessment than in a group."

"Group settings can also be positive and mimic a team environment, but a one-on-one relationship allows for a deeper bond of trust. Sometimes that can make all the difference in the world," Albracht explains.

Ask questions. If engaging a personal trainer isn't in our available budget, they are often willing to answer a few burning fitness questions. Most of us have had volunteer teachers at some point in our lives that expected nothing in return because they loved sharing what they know. It's a slower process, but can be a viable option.

Set realistic goals. "I tell clients that structuring a program of specific goals will always trump a non-structured program," says Albracht. "They need to fill out a goals sheet and develop a personal model that is repeatable, sustainable and successful. We use the SMART acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely." Sometimes writing things down is just what's needed to make them actually happen.

"When you look at pictures of famous people in magazines, realize

that the images have been Photo-shopped. They also have access to the best and most expensive resources in the world, and looking good is their job," reminds Rankin. "Set a goal, and then set a bunch of small, achievable, measurable and quantifiable steps along the way that'll push you towards that bigger goal."

For example, If the goal is to lose 50 pounds in a year, then maybe shoot to lose 30 pounds in the first six months and 20 in the second six months. "Breaking it up into what feels doable for you is key," says Rankin.

Establish intentions. Krysten Clark, a Los Angeles personal trainer, yoga teacher and founder of Yogva Nutrition, uses the SMART elements along with establishing an intention for each session. She states, "It's important to recognize what 'being healthy' means to you. I always have my clients set an intention for their workout in the moment, which allows them to be fully present with what they're doing and why they're doing it. Connecting with their 'why' proves powerful in a day-to-day practice."

She also strives to bring mindfulness into any fitness workout that evolves from a mind-body connection. The accompanying sense of self-compassion furthers progress in the never-ending process of personal growth and healthy living.

Acquire a fitness posse. An accountability partner can be a friend or a personal trainer—someone that's only a phone call away. Rankin observes, "If you know that you are letting someone down by not working out, then you are more likely to stick to a plan, especially if you're paying that person."

Hit the reset button if needed. "Set a deadline to attain a goal and work backwards from there to achieve it," advises Albracht. "If the goal is missed, reassess and plan again." Be patient and forgive yourself as often as necessary if slip-ups occur. The ultimate results of feeling good and healthier provide their own payoff.

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