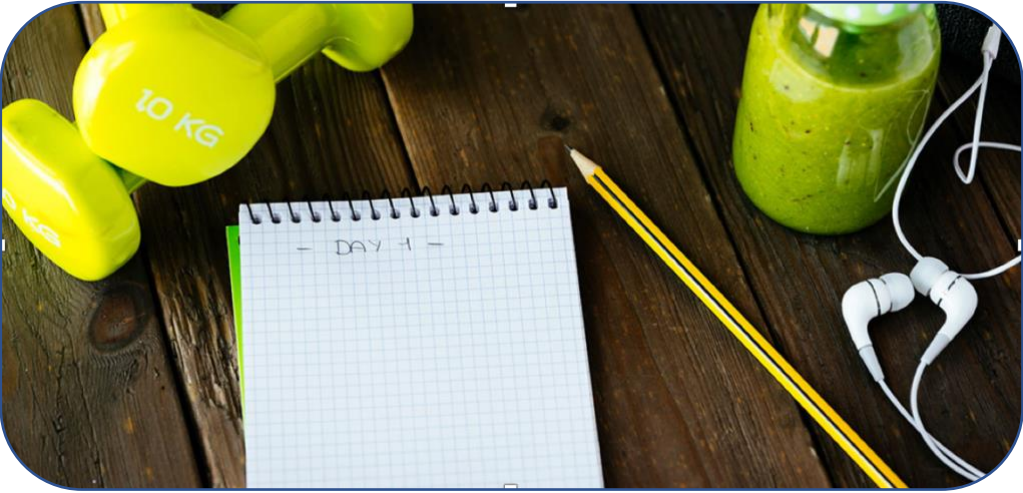


Whether you're setting out for the first time with a fitness-related New Year's resolution, or you've been down this road before, there's always two paths you can end up on: Making exercise a year-long (lifelong!) habit, or abandoning your efforts until the next new year rolls around.

Now is the time to set a precedent for success. The simple trick to making a fitness New Year's resolution last is to accept that getting and staying in shape won't always be easy. But the numerous rewards are worth it. To that end, consider these tips for how you can continue to stick to your New Year's resolutions.



Do Away With the Term “New Year’s Resolution”

The term “New Year’s resolution” is notoriously associated with broken promises and half-baked attempts at self-improvement, so avoid uttering these words in relation to your big exercise plans. New Year’s

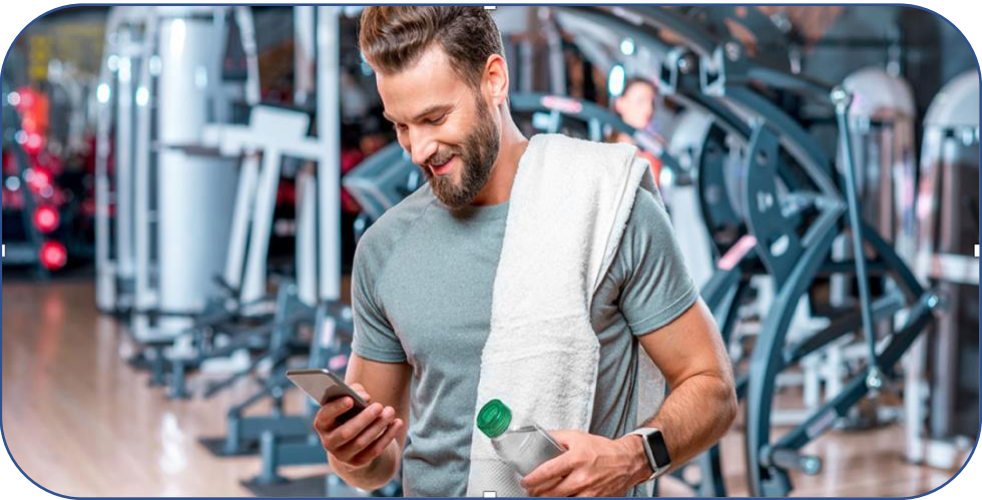
resolutions are so strongly tied to the month of January—and, specifically, the beginning of January—that it’s no wonder they hold little-to-no merit by February or March.

Instead, carve out *goals*. And make them realistic enough to achieve and specific enough for you to clearly imagine them becoming a reality.

Make Small Goals Out of Your Big Goal

You might have a big goal to work toward, but stopping your goal-setting there could set you up for failure. After all, a large goal that might take months to achieve could begin to feel too daunting or devoid of payoff.

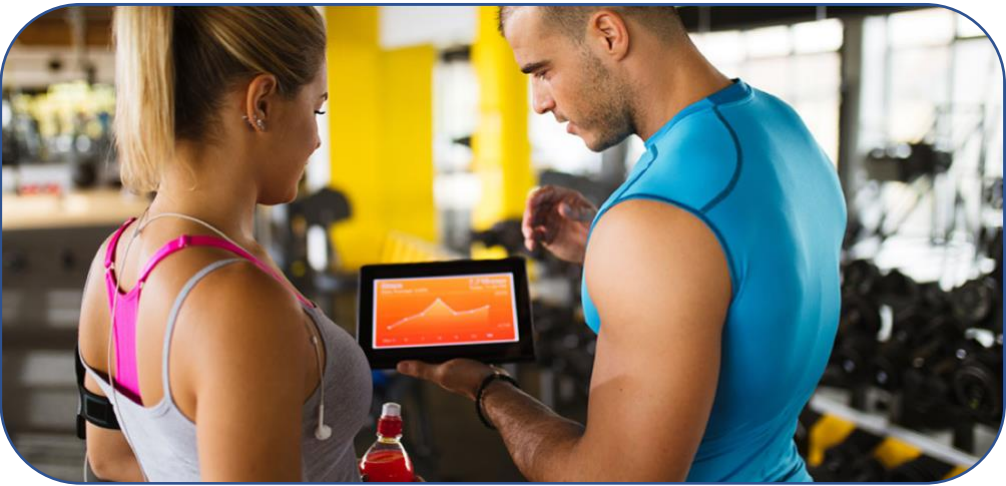
In addition to your main goal(s), create smaller ones that, when met, provide an immediate feeling of accomplishment and indicate your progression. These smaller goals could be simple ones that bring you closer to your bigger goal. Here’s an example of an effective small goal: getting to the gym three days this week and working out there for 45 minutes. Each gym visit, and the progress you track along the way, gives you something to cross off your list in the moment, which can feel more motivating over time than if you were just focused on a single, long-range objective like, say, losing 50 pounds.



Shout It From the Rooftops

Well, maybe not...but do tell folks about what you're up to (remember, consider avoiding the “New Year’s resolution” terminology altogether). Social support can help you stay accountable, so tell family, friends and your gym buddies about how exercise has become part of your weekly

routine. Share that you're working toward a fitness-related goal. If you're into social media, post often about your progress.



Hire a Personal Trainer

There's no better way to commit to exercise than by hiring a personal trainer. He or she can help you reach your goals faster. And when you don't feel like going to the gym (which will happen), you'll go anyway because your trainer is there, waiting for you—not to mention you've already paid

for the session. Having a personal trainer on your team, even if it's just once a week or once every two weeks, helps set you up for success.



Plan Beyond January

Finally, map out your commitment to exercise well beyond the first month or two of the New Year. Nail down your entire workout schedule for the rest of the winter and into the spring. In other words, you should already know in January that you'll be busy on Friday mornings in March (and April and May) with a personal-training appointment or

Zumba class.

Committing to a schedule so far in advance does mean plans could change. And yes, chances are you'll miss workouts and eat unhealthy food sometimes. It's not an indication that you should give up on your goals. It's just life. So carry on—every new day is a new opportunity to work on your health and fitness resolutions.