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UNWRAPPED

Bring on 2005



Ending diet fads is key to curbing your appetite and improving overall nutrition.

Expert Advice on Sticking to New Year's Resolutions

Whether calling for something as simple as drinking eight glasses of water daily or as seemingly insurmountable as quitting smoking, New Year's resolutions are often something we dread. The mere phrase evokes visions of deprivation, hard work and broken promises. We can't help but relish all those resolutions from previous years unapologetically tossed by the wayside after only a few months. The health-club industry is full of this kind of beginning-of-the-year behavior. Amy Skidmore, general manager for Sports Club/LA San Francisco, describes the typical New Year's rush: "We see higher attendance levels in the beginning of the year due to people's New Year's resolutions or recommitment to their fitness regime." However, she says, "as the year goes by, we work with our members to help keep them committed to a healthy lifestyle."

To often, instead of embracing resolutions as an opportunity for change, we bar ourselves from the "pain" associated with trying something new. Fearing failure, we lose sight of the joy inherent in the journey. We fall into the trap of trying to be perfect and overlook the beauty of our strivings. "I tell my clients that what you did yesterday is just what you did yesterday," says Douglas Ruark, a private trainer at The Sports Club/LA San Francisco. "So many people aren't able to meet their goals because they're focused on what they didn't do right yesterday rather than what's possible today." And we forget how quickly

small steps can add up to big ones. ("For some of my clients, 20 minutes of walking on the treadmill is enough to get started," says Ruark.)

So, as 2005 arrives, instead of bracing yourself against the inevitable changes that New Year's resolutions will bring to your life, open yourself to them. Need some expert advice? Read on for fun and helpful ways to tackle some common resolutions for 2005.

1. Lose Weight

If you're struggling to lose weight, you may want to hire a personal trainer. At places like The Sports Club/LA San Francisco, personal trainers do a lot more than simply walk through weight circuits with their clients. They also test their clients' fitness levels, offer referrals to nutritional counseling and provide tireless inspiration. Take The Sports Club/LA San Francisco's Ruark. Formerly 100 pounds overweight himself, the now in-shape 50-year-old trainer has helped clients lose anywhere from 20 to 163 pounds. Ruark says his secret is to help free his clients from self-judgment by sharing his own story of being overweight. "I want people to know that I've experienced the same thing, that I've gone through it and so can they." Sessions begin in the Club's Fitness Lab, where clients' blood pressure, resting heart rate, aerobic fitness and body-fat measurements are tested. After determining the amount of weight loss needed, Ruark and the client devise a one-year goal (later broken down into one-, three- and six-month goals), which is specified in writing and signed by both. "Making a contract with yourself and another person is incredibly powerful," says Ruark. "You may not keep your contract with yourself, but you'll keep it with me."

2. Exercise, or Exercise More

Hand-in-hand with promising to lose weight, most people vow to increase their exercise regime. And though such a plan may seem small, it can represent a major lifestyle change. "Most people know they need to be at work by nine, but when it comes to exercise, they don't make the time," says The Sports Club/LA San Francisco's Skidmore. "It's the commitment. They have to make the commitment." One way to make it easier is to get support from either a workout buddy or group. That's why The Sports Club/LA San Francisco offers 85 classes weekly, including such eclectic offerings as Definitions, Sets & Reps, REV, Yoga, Splash, Body Art Pilates Mat, Splash and Box! Crucial to getting people to continue meeting their commitment is the instructor. "Most people, if they like an instructor, will find a way to get to that class no matter what," Skidmore says. To members and nonmembers, the Club offers six-week programs like GUTS, or Girls Ultimate Training System, a one-and-a-half-hour cardio-boxing class that—Skidmore reports—jump-started many of the participants' commitment to training. So whether it's a blindingly intense cycle class or an ultra-mellow candlelight stretch class that gets your attention—go!

3. Eat Better

Critical to losing or maintaining weight is diet, and, surprisingly, one sure-fire way to improve your eating habits is to stop dieting, according to Rania Batayneh, a nutritionist at The Sports Club/LA San Francisco. Dieting can throw your body out of balance and can actually cause you to gain weight, she says. Calling herself a wellness



coach, food strategist and lifestyle manager, Batayneh says her primary mission when working with clients is to develop a low-maintenance eating program ("Don't make it a second job!" quips Batayneh) that fulfills the body's daily needs. And the first step to determining a client's daily needs is to test his or her resting metabolic rate. When asked about both the fat-free and low-carb diets, Batayneh emphasizes the need for people to balance their intake of carbohydrates, proteins and fats with every meal—even snacks! That's right, snacks are allowed. (Try FAGE's 80-calorie, zero-fat Greek yogurt with a quarter cup of strawberries.) In fact, Batayneh suggests eating more, rather than less, often—every three hours if possible—and never, ever going hungry. Prepare your own meals or hire a chef to cut down on your intake of processed foods and, in Batayneh's words, "treat yourself like a star."

4. Look Better

Are you working out and eating well but still struggling with unsightly cellulite? If so, consider a different approach. Endermologie—a noninvasive method to fighting cellulite—breaks down fat cells in the body through mechanical stimulation. Approved by the FDA in 1996, Endermologie is relaxing, safe and highly effective, according to Dr. Alexza Bagherian, who owns Contour, a business specializing in Endermologie. In addition to smoothing cellulite, the procedure also improves skin elasticity, boosts circulation, reshapes the body and can even result in weight loss. And the best part is that it's totally safe. In fact, Dr. Bagherian says most of his clients are already healthy. He insists on their following a balanced diet, drinking lots of water, getting regular exercise and eliminating such bad habits as smoking or excess drinking as part of a holistic approach to fighting cellulite. "My motto is, 'If you take a health approach, the aesthetic will follow,'" Dr. Bagherian says.

5. Find a New Career

Switching careers represents a major life change, equal in stress levels to a move or divorce. But the possible benefits, which can include more money or increased personal gratification, can be sweet enough to merit the leap. The Creative Group, a San Francisco-based employment agency, can help. Catering to people working in creative fields such as copywriting, marketing and design, to name a few, The Creative Group

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offers free services for those looking for something new. Hop onto its extensive website listings at www.creativegroup.com to get a sense of what's out there. Then, take advantage of The Creative Group's one-on-one services to help you to craft your résumé, brush up on your interview skills and develop leads. The Creative Group offers freelance, part-time and full-time positions with roughly 50 percent of its freelance and part-time positions turning into full-time work. This is called a "working interview," according to Lucy Marino, director of The Creative Group's office in San Francisco. "If the employer has a position open, they're more likely to hire someone who has proven their capabilities than interview someone new."

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