

# A Fitness Guide For A New You

Guide to Making a Positive Change for the New You

Brought to you by Ali Jones [www.women-n-nutrition.com](http://www.women-n-nutrition.com)



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## **New Year, New You – Special Report**

### **Introduction**

The New Year brings with it a whole host of possibilities. What will be different this year? Usually the answers to this and other questions are summed up in New Year's resolutions.

You know what those are. Every December 31st, before the stroke of midnight, we grab a sheet of paper or someone's ear, and tell them what we will change about our lives in the coming 365 days. Some of the most popular resolutions:

- \* Weight loss
- \* New Job
- \* Exercise
- \* Make more money

The list can go on and on. Unfortunately, the same bulleted points keep popping up on that list of resolutions year after year. It is a vicious cycle that can leave some people disillusioned and hopeless about the future.

This year, decide that you will change and for the better. What you lacked in years past may just be lurking within the pages of this report. We hope so, because this year we want to see a whole new you!

### **FITNESS GOALS**

One of the most frequent New Year's resolutions is to become more active. When you exercise, you can lose weight. Most people are eating, drinking and making merry from November through the first of the year. That, on top of being inactive, is the reason why this resolution tops the list. But, if you try a few new ways to make that resolution a reality it won't top your list any longer.

#### **Setting Realistic Goals**

It is not enough to say that you want to get active. That could mean anything. And, when you feel too tired to work out, it makes a great excuse. Start with a plan.

Set specific about what you want to accomplish with this resolution. Saying "I want to run a marathon" or "I want to be able to ride my bicycle five miles at a stretch" gets to the heart of the matter. Now, you have a concrete place to start. Without it, it could be March before you get going with your fitness goals.

Confide your plan in a friend. They can help you to stay accountable to your goals with little nudges now and again. You can also develop a buddy system network so there will always be someone available to work out with you and help you to stay motivated.

Devise ways to avoid self-sabotage. We all know what that is about. You forget your gym clothes and have to go home after work to get them. When you get there, you realize you are too tired to go back out so you vow to exercise the next two days to make up for it.

Here are a few tips:

\* Keep your gym bag packed and in your car. When you launder your sweaty clothes, place them back in the bag and back in your car.

\* Carry a snack in your gym bag so that you can fuel up before a workout and re-fuel after. Don't forget your water bottle and a few bucks for an extra one at the gym.

\* Decide on a time to exercise and stick to it. If you plan to go after work, stick to it no matter what time you get off. If mornings are best, go then. Let everyone in your family know what your intentions are so that nothing will be scheduled at these times to interfere if at all possible.

See your doctor. Starting a fitness program after being sedentary for a while or working out sporadically can be hard on your body. You don't want to get injured and quit before you actually get going.

Your doctor can give you a complete physical. If there are any reasons why you can't perform a certain exercise, it will probably be revealed in this process. Doctors can also give you tips on how to pace yourself and help you to set realistic goals. For one, the motto, "No pain, no gain" is a myth. If you are feeling pain, the best thing to do is stop and find out why.

## **Get Educated**

The more you know, the better you will be able to meet your goals. If you are new to exercise, read a few books. There are tons of magazines on fitness. Beginner books can teach you basic body mechanics. Depending on your fitness goals, these resources can also help you flesh out your fitness plan to include exercises and routines specific to your goal.

There are tons of infomercials touting the latest health and fitness products. Before you buy, do a little research. What equipment will work best for you? Will you workout at home or use a facility? Many of those products are not what they seem to be and you can waste your money and your time. If you decide to join a gym, you won't need to furnish a home gym also.

One thing you will learn in all of those books and research is that there are no shortcuts to fitness. You have to do the work to get the benefits. But, the great thing about it is that once you start to see your body change shape, you will want to exercise more often so that you can see even more changes. You will become your greatest fan and motivator.

A good fitness program includes both aerobic exercise and strength training exercise. Use your research skills to get acquainted with both aspects of fitness and how they can help you. First, aerobic exercise strengthens the heart and lungs. You will learn to breathe properly and increase your endurance with each workout. Aerobic exercise is a big part of the weight loss equation.

As far as strength training goes, it is anaerobic. The changes that take place are within the muscles themselves. As you perform the routines, muscle fibers are stretched, broken down and built back up to form stronger muscles. Everyone needs strength training to improve muscle tone and burn fat.

What about a personal trainer? It is an option you may want to explore if you are struggling to get started. A personal trainer can teach you proper technique and suggest workout routines for your fitness goals.

### **Aerobic Exercise**

We touched on this a little bit earlier. Aerobic exercise is important for losing weight and improving cardiovascular health. To begin, working out at least 30 minutes a day three times a week will get you going and help you form the habit of fitness.

You have a variety of choices when it comes to choosing an aerobic activity to pursue. Start with one and then add more to avoid boredom.

- \* Dancing
- \* Step aerobics
- \* Spinning (stationary bicycle routines)
- \* Elliptical trainers or treadmills
- \* Intramural sports

Many health clubs offer dance classes. Because you use your entire body to perform the moves, it can burn hundreds of calories an hour and you get to have fun at the same time. For older people or those with back or joint problems, elliptical trainers and treadmills offer low impact but high intensity workouts.

### **Strength Training**

As we age, we lose muscle mass. Lean muscle can be replaced with fat stores which can compromise our health. Working these different muscle groups keep the body working efficiently inside and out. Strong muscles help avoid workplace injuries and falls in the home.

The goal of strength training is stronger, leaner muscles not necessarily bigger muscles. You don't have to have bulging biceps to have strong arms. Using free weights allows you to learn the movements and get the full benefit of a particular exercise. When you are ready, you can use weight machines to increase your strength.

Unlike aerobic exercise which can be done every day, strength training can be overdone that way. Each muscle group needs at least 48 hours between workouts to recover. The exception is the abdominal region. That can be worked each day, but in shorter increments like ten to fifteen minutes for maximum effect.

### **Seasonal Exercise**

When seasons change, we are tempted to change our fitness routines. For instance, in the winter, motivation can wane as the weather turns cold. Don't let it. Before winter comes, investigate new exercise options so that you can keep striving towards your fitness goals. Instead of water skiing, try snow skiing, snowboarding or ice skating.

In the summer, most people love to be outdoors. The concern here is doing too much. In the heat, you have to be prepared. Stay hydrated before, during and after your workouts. Wear loose fitting clothes and sunscreen if you plan on being outdoors for any length of time. Know your limits and learn to work within them.

## **HEALTHY EATING**

### **Setting Your Goals**

Again, saying that you want to lose weight and get healthy is too generic. That can mean almost anything. You have to get specific if you expect to know when you have reached your goal.

Be realistic in your attitude and approach to healthier eating. If weight loss is your goal, it didn't take two months to put on the weight and it won't take two months to get it all off. When infomercials promise, that their eating plan or diet supplements will do just that, fight the temptation to believe them.

Conceiving a plan that is too strict is just asking for disaster. Instead of trying to go "cold turkey" on all your favorite foods, take it one food item at a time. Slowly swap refined snacks for more natural foods, I am a big fan of low carbohydrate plans as in reducing breads, pastas etc. Make substitutions in meal ingredients to lower calorie content. With each new success you will be less likely to fall back into old patterns.

They say that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting a different result. We are not calling you insane, but if you set a goal of eating healthier but do not make lifestyle changes, you are close to it. To eat healthy, you may have to give up something that is not so good for you. Within your goal setting, write down what you are willing to give up eating or start eating to reach your goal.

Enlist the help of others. Let them know your eating goals. They may be able to offer suggestions for implementing your plan that you haven't thought about. Your friends and family will also keep you accountable to your plan.

## **Get Educated**

Knowing about food, aids in food choices. That same bookstore that houses books on fitness also has books on eating well and losing weight. If your goal is to manage chronic conditions with food, you can find out about that.

One of the new concepts to hit grocery stores is “functional foods.” These are foods that do double duty for your body. It is like orange juice that is fortified with calcium. If you don’t drink milk, you can still get the calcium you need. Functional foods include juices, breads, cereals, snacks and dairy products.

Part of eating is cooking. Learn to cook and enjoy recipes made with natural foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Processed foods can contain lots of sodium (preservative) and hidden fat. In a meal prepared at home, you will know what is and isn’t in your food.

Filling foods are those that help you to last between meals without entertaining those cravings for sweets or high fat foods. Potatoes, protein sources, whole grains, pasta and certain other vegetables qualify as filling foods. If you choose a food that is low on the glycemic index (system used to rate the effect of carbohydrates on blood sugar) you will stay full and experience a steady energy supply throughout the day.

## **Get Help**

There is no shame in having someone alongside you to guide you towards your healthy eating goals. If you need outside motivation, knowledge and tools, they are available to you.

Weight Watchers is just one of several successful weight loss and management programs. Here you can find peer support, helpful meeting leaders, recipes, goal setting tips and online resources to answer your questions and keep you on the right track. Some programs can be costly but it all depends on what will work best for you.

Other programs:

- \* Jenny Craig
- \* Physician’s Weight Loss
- \* NutriSystem
- \* Weigh-Less

There are free online programs that provide the same support for you. You can talk with others who are in the midst of a weight loss or healthier eating journey. There are recipes, ideas for sticking to goals and helpful articles on all aspects of eating for life.

## **Healthy Eating/Exercise Connection**

There is a correlation between exercise and healthy eating. Eating healthier means getting more of the nutrients that your body needs every day. High blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and heart disease can be reduced with better food choices. People have had the opportunity to stop their medications once they changed the way that they used food.

Exercise can benefit you at all stages of your life. Keeping your body operating in optimal condition can lower your risk of many conditions: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, atherosclerosis, and others. Weight loss occurs when you burn more calories than you eat.

Obesity affects your body. Carrying extra weight is hard on the joints, can lead to sleep issues (sleep apnea, reflux) and other aches and pains. Maintaining a healthy weight gives you more energy, a stronger body, and the possibility for a longer life.

## **POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESS**

### **Visualization**

When it comes to making those New Year's resolution a reality, pull out all the stops. Visualization is a technique that can influence your success. It involves, using imagery to create the life that you want.

We all do a little bit of visualization each day. It's like sitting and thinking about how nice it would be to spend time in the park riding your bike and then you strap your bike on the back of your car and head to the park.

Creative visualization can be the means to staying motivated. It may take some time to get the hang of it, but you can do it with practice. Here's another example. Let's say that you are battling with drinking enough water each day. Maybe you just don't like the taste of plain water.

Visualize ways that you can spruce up that water like adding flavor packets, drinking tea, coffee or carbonated water. Imagine how you would prepare it, how it would taste and see yourself drinking eight glasses of water each day.

This technique involves relaxation, positive thinking and accepting that you can achieve what you see. Imagine each step along the way and then achieve it. Normally, we skip right to the end and miss all the work in between which can be discouraging. Smaller steps lead to one big achievement.

### **Self-Hypnosis**

Hypnosis was once thought to be a quack profession better left to mystics and magicians. Over the years, it has come to develop a more favorable reputation as an alternative technique that is very useful. People have used hypnosis to stop unhealthy habits like smoking and drinking. There are even programs that use hypnosis to break through barriers to weight loss.

Self-hypnosis uses the same basic principles of a hypnosis session but you do it yourself. It is mostly used for relaxation and stress management. Stress can be a big deterrent to the changes that you want to make for a healthier lifestyle that includes physical activity and better eating habits.

Here is how it works. Begin by finding a nice quiet and comfortable place where you won't be disturbed. Allow your body to begin to relax in the setting.

You may want to use positive affirmations as a part of your self-hypnosis technique. They can pertain to whatever it is that you want to accomplish. With your affirmations, you are totally focusing on the positive so that there is no room for negative self-talk.

After you find a place to relax, use imagery to help your body to slow down. Remember those old cartoons with someone swinging a watch back and forth and saying "You're getting very sleepy"? It is something along that line.

You can tell yourself that you are getting sleepy as you "see" the relaxation spreading like water over your body. Breathing is important as well. Keep your breathing smooth and steady. Over time you may develop a rhythm that makes relaxation easier to achieve.

Once you are totally relaxed, you can begin with your affirmations. Repeat them slowly to get the full effect of your words. Each session won't take more than half an hour to perform.

If you'd rather have the assistance of a professional you can find a reputable hypnotist or hypnotherapist to do the job. Hypnotism can help you get to the root of issues that may have kept you from achieving these same goals in the past.

These are just a couple of tools you can use to aid in your quest for a healthier new you. It is not always easy to change habits no matter how much you really want to. It takes a combination of things to make it happen.

## **CONCLUSION**

This year will be the last year that the desire to eat healthy and get active are on your list of New Year's resolutions. Why, you may ask? This year you will be prepared to make the changes that you have always wanted for your life.

First, fess up. Part of what has been holding you back is you. Whether it is self-sabotage or a lack of a definite plan, a change in attitude and a change in plan are in order.

Make your plans clear and focused for what you want to achieve. Take steps to help yourself overcome any barriers to your success. This includes learning all you can about the subjects of fitness and eating better.

Then, get to work. Each step of the way, see yourself getting closer to your goal. Remember, changes won't happen overnight but they will happen. And, your life will be all the better for them.

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