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FINDING IT HARD TO STICK TO YOUR HEALTH AND FITNESS RESOLUTIONS? THESE 10 EXPERT TIPS WILL SPUR YOU ON

WORDS LISA HARVEY
PHOTOGRAPH RACHEL WHITING

Motivate yourself (the easy way)

Join the team

No, that doesn't necessarily mean netball – unless you enjoy it, of course. But research says that nine out of 10 of us do better when we're not alone. 'Your team doesn't have to be competitive,' says personal trainer Si Rutter (nutrition-rocks.co.uk). Look for local teams, such as clubs, that specialise in running, walking, climbing or cycling.

Switch every 10 weeks

Keep your body guessing by changing workouts, says personal trainer Kathryn Freeland (absolutefitness.co.uk). 'Discovering a new workout every 10 weeks is the optimum time – you won't get bored or reach a plateau,' she says. The more different the change – switch, say, from Pilates to zumba – the better.

Make a bet

'Make an agreement with a friend that if you don't achieve your target, you'll give them £100,' says James Lamper, founder of weightmatters.co.uk. In a US study, people offered a financial incentive to attend a gym did twice as much exercise as those who weren't paid.

Post-it your goals

'To add more exercise to your day, put Post-it notes such as, "Do 10 squats"

by the kitchen sink, "Do 10 half press-ups" by your bed, or "Do a plank" by the bath,' suggests fitness and lifestyle consultant Sarah Maxwell.

Tweet what you eat

'Use Twitter and Facebook to keep friends, family and followers updated with your diet progress,' says personal trainer Jon Trevor (jontrevor.com). 'It's a powerful way of making you accountable.' One study showed dieters who logged meals and exercise lost twice as much weight as those who didn't.

Double your measurements

'Get your measurements done with your workout buddy, so you have a combined total to work on,' says Ali Campbell, author of *Just Get On With It* (Hay House, £8.99). 'Having a number you need to lower as a pair is an extra push.'

Have a treat a month

'Stop feelings of deprivation with a concrete list of 12 treats, one for each month that you reach your milestone,' says Jack Challem, author of *No More Fatigue* (John Wiley & Sons, £17.99). Think of things that reinforce a mind-body connection:

a new gym kit or trainers, a walk in the countryside, a spa day, smaller-size jeans or a designer bikini.

Look in someone else's eyes

The most effective visualisation? Surprisingly, it turns out to be imagining that someone else is watching you achieve your goal. 'It should be a person you admire greatly or love deeply,' says Gael Lindenfield, author of *101 Morale Boosters* (Piatkus, £8.99).

Be generous

'Pick a charity you're passionate about for your sponsored run, walk, bike or swim,' says Dr Lisa Turner, founder of *Psychademy* (psychademy.co.uk). 'Each time you think about skipping training, the people your charity helps will come to mind, giving you the extra push you need.'

Give yourself a week off

One week off every three to six months allows the body to fully recover, keeps you healthy, accelerates fat burning – and helps you stay on track for the long term. 'Over-training can slow results and deplete energy levels and your immune system,' says Zana Morris, area manager of *EducoGym* (educogym.com). ■