

When the going gets tough...

The tough

keep going!

Got your New Year fitness plan off to a flying start but now you're struggling to keep it up? Our tips will sort you out!

We've all been there – we begin the New Year with the best of intentions to stick to a diet, take up exercise and lose weight. But sooner or later we hit the wall, lose enthusiasm and fall off the wagon. Let's be honest, we know it's worth it in the end – but losing weight the healthy way can be a long, hard process.

So how do you keep going when you feel like giving up? We asked fitness and wellbeing expert Scott Bryant, a Level-3 corrective holistic kinesiology practitioner, for his advice...



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Be patient

Scott reminds all his clients that healthy weight loss is no sprint. 'Patience is as important as determination,' he explains. 'If you stick at it for more than three months, you'll permanently change your lifestyle.' To break that barrier, you need the support of friends who won't lure you away from the vegetable aisle and into the biscuit tin. 'Surround yourself with positive people who are going through the same process.'

Think positively

How you think influences your behaviour – but how you think is within your control. So when that new, slimmer you seems out of reach, stop and force your mind to think positively. 'Try grabbing the bits of your body you're most insecure about and saying "I love you" into the mirror six times each night,' says Scott. 'It empowers you and prompts you to make good choices.'



Well Done!

Write it down

How often do you sit and evaluate what you've eaten? Keeping a food diary is a great way to continually analyse your eating habits so the bad ones don't creep back in. But don't just record what you eat. 'Take some time to write down how you feel after a meal,' says Scott, 'how full, bloated, energised or happy you are. It takes time to re-educate yourself and work out what foods work best for you.'



Set goals

Try not to aim for massive ones like, 'I'm going to lose three dress sizes,' but rather bite-sized ones to help you progress. That way, you'll experience positive results more regularly that will keep you motivated. Aim to lose a healthy and steady 1lb-2lb a week or try setting goals like 5 per cent of your starting weight – losing just this amount

means you'll begin to enjoy greater health and wellbeing. Then move on to 10 per cent and so on. 'You need to write your goals down twice a day, or your subconscious won't take it in and those goals will never become a reality,' says Scott. 'Write them down in the morning and before bed, and recite them aloud.' And Scott believes rewards are just as important as targets: 'Book a fantastic holiday to encourage yourself to get into shape,' he advises.

Whip out the measuring tape...

...and ditch the scales. Counting just the pounds will not help you work out how big or small you look – weight can be deceptive. For example muscle weighs more than fat, so if you develop more muscle as you tone up



your weight can actually increase. 'Go by how your clothes fit instead, and measure your waist, biceps, chest, thighs and neck regularly,' suggests Scott.

Pick up the weights

Don't be disheartened if your waistline stops shrinking after the first few weeks, it's natural. But be careful how you react to it. 'A month into a diet, most people's weight loss begins to slow down,' warns Scott. 'There is a tendency for women to up their cardiovascular training, which is totally wrong.' The energy you need to repair muscle tissue after a weights-based workout means you actually continue converting fat to muscle days after you've stopped exercising. 'I would say extend your weight sessions rather than your run,' says Scott. 'You won't end up looking like a bodybuilder, I promise!'

Plan ahead

This is one of the most powerful tools for successful weight loss. Try some simple steps to start with – like planning the next few nights' meals, looking up healthy menu choices at the restaurant where you're meeting friends this weekend, or writing up a list of healthy alternatives to your usual favourites before you head to the shops. According to Scott, sourcing natural, preservative-free food can make all the difference. 'Use organic shops or buy from farmer's markets if possible, to avoid processed food that's full of toxins and pesticides,' he says.

Eat wisely

It's the most obvious one, but until you've got your mind and lifestyle sorted, you'll find it hardest to achieve.

When you're in control, you'll pick the right foods to ensure you stay comfortably full. 'If you're craving something sweet, buy a slab of dark raw chocolate from your local wholefood supplier,' says Scott. 'It doesn't have the same additives as supermarket chocolate.' He has a few gems up his sleeve for enjoying alcohol, too. 'If you know you're going to get sozzled on a work night out, snack beforehand on nuts soaked in water, some cheese or an omelette. People think they need to load up on carbs before a night out, when what they actually need is protein to line the stomach.' Above all though, Scott reckons you should find time to enjoy yourself within your new healthy lifestyle: 'Work to my 80/20 rule: 80 per cent of the time, work hard to reach your goals, but reserve 20 per cent of your time for fun!'



Scott's regimes incorporate elements of nutrition, posture, holistic therapy, physiotherapy and emotional control. He encourages each client to discover what types of food work best for them. For more details on Scott's individual approach to fitness and weight loss, visit activebryantsystems.com