



Physiotherapist Jane Connolly HPC CSP advises on how we can start to improve our health and wellbeing as we go into 2017 after some well-deserved time off over Christmas

It's that time of year again where we make New Year's resolutions to keep fit and healthy.

We all know exercise is good for health and well-being. It not only improves muscle tone and general fitness, it also increases energy levels, stabilises sleep patterns and boosts self-esteem and mood. It has also been proven that regular activity lowers the chance of developing heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

To help you get started, here is a list of top tips:

LEAN & KEEN IN '17

*** Make exercise enjoyable**

– Finding an activity that you enjoy doing, increases the likelihood that you will stick at it. Hours on a treadmill may not be your thing so take your dog for a long walk instead. Any activity that gets your heart rate up is good and if you make a regular commitment to exercise with a friend then you will be more likely to continue.

or burnout, resulting in you giving up exercise altogether.

*** Try something new and set a goal** – If you're already exercising regularly, set yourself a challenge to try something new. This is a good way to ensure you don't get bored, and often you'll find that embarking on a new activity uses different parts of your body that you aren't used to, increasing your overall mobility.



*** Don't overdo it, be realistic**

– It may be tempting, while you have the fitness buzz, to go from 0 to 60 straight away. Resist this urge and ease yourself in gently to begin with. Doing too much too soon, can lead to injuries

Setting realistic, attainable goals is key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

*** Eating and drinking well**

– Studies have shown around 80 per cent of any fitness goal depends on your diet.

This applies whether you are trying to lose weight or train for an event. Food is fuel for your body and it is important that you put the right things in it to maximise results. Also keep hydrated! For everyone, a healthy and well-balanced diet should be part of our lifestyle.

*** Warm up, cool down and stretch**

– You are less likely to get an injury if you do a warm up and stretch before and after exercising. It may only be for about 10 minutes or so but is essential in preparing your body mentally and physically for your exercise session. Don't forget about rest – when you relax, the body is able to repair itself post exercise.

*** Preventative physiotherapy**

– Regular visits to an expert physiotherapist will enable you to avoid unnecessary aches and pains. It makes sense to start off from a pain-free, injury-free status or get professional advice to ensure you don't exacerbate any existing injuries or acquire new ones due to inappropriate exercising.

Try some of these tips and see how they can help you to keep those New Year's resolutions! ■

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