

January 2006 ISSUE

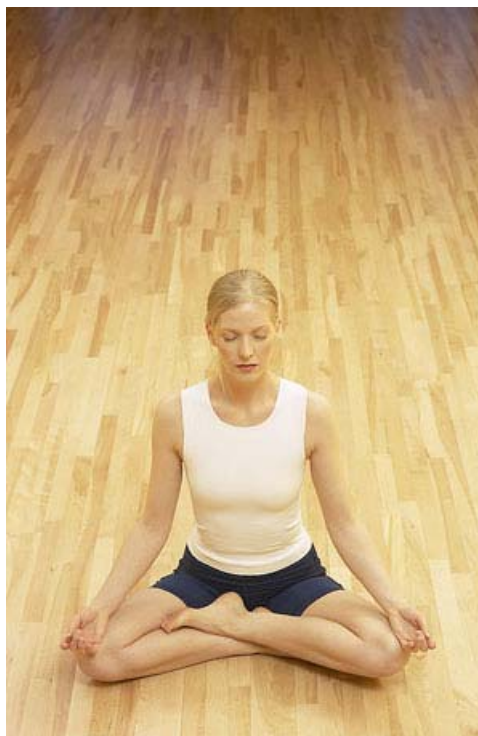
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You Say You Want A Resolution?



Start by thinking about it—and then listen to what your body is telling you. Develop fitness goals that are distinctly your own. By customizing a unique exercise and nutrition program, you'll go a long way to achieving results in the upcoming year.

The typical New Year's resolution is more wishful thinking than true resolve. While the promises we make frequently last only as long as it takes to countdown to midnight, right now is an ideal time to reflect on the current state of your fitness affairs especially in the context of discernable trends for 2006.

According to IDEA's (San Diego-based international organization of health and fitness professionals) influential year-end assessment, 40 per cent of fitness clients are novices—indicating a remarkable new focus on physical fitness. Continuing interest in yoga and Pilates and their

hybrids suggests that the mind and body connection is stronger than ever. The stability ball is enjoying resurgence—a reflection of interest in core training. Balance training is becoming a club staple, as is the boot camp experience. Personal training is emerging as a mainstream phenomenon, no longer the exclusive domain of the wealthy.

"The area that has really evolved in the past few years is mind-body fitness. Exercise programs such as Pilates and yoga are becoming increasingly popular. The major improvement here is that people are encouraged now to become more aware of their bodies and how they move and thus their control and postural awareness is enhanced, not only for exercise but for everyday life," says Lisa Westlake (www.physicalbest.com), physiotherapist and Australian Fitness Leader of the year in 2000 and Fitness Presenter of the year in 2003.

Westlake is happy with the continued emphasis on core strength development.

"It's led to increased awareness of the importance of deep muscular control to assist and support the spine, pelvic and shoulder girdles whilst other movement occurs. When the core muscles are recruited correctly, this leads to improved form and decreased risk of injury. Gently drawing-in your lower abdomen whenever you think of it, and during exercise is an easy way to improve your spinal stability and decrease your risk of back pain. Settling your shoulder blades gently downwards and inwards (the opposite of shrugging) will help you keep your shoulders, neck and upper back looking good and feeling great."

She is an enthusiastic proponent of balance training, particularly as baby boomers age.

"Balance declines with time and it is imperative we train balance, righting reactions, proprioception in order to improve sport performance, everyday function and to decrease the risk of falls. Balance training is especially important for those in the second half of life; while bone-density issues are well addressed now, we should also look at improving balance to decrease the risk of falls and thus fractures. Including simple exercises such as standing on one leg or sitting on a fitball while performing a strength exercise, is an easy way to incorporate balance into mainstream training. It's vital to include balance options to suit the individual."

When considering any change to your fitness regimen, it's important to arm yourself with good information and competent instruction.

"People should stop following all those crazy fad diets we see in newspapers and TV ads...I think people finally realized that those diets do not work and they started looking for good nutritionists and personal trainers...If you really want to get into a great shape in the New Year, find a great personal trainer who has a big track record and you won't go wrong," says Joe DiAngelo, (www.musclebomb.com) New York-based personal trainer and nutrition specialist.

It's critical to tackle fitness on multiple fronts, says DiAngelo:

"Fitness performance has three parts: physical training, technical skill, and psychological readiness. This model suggests that if any of the above areas are neglected, fitness performance will decline. However, psychological preparation is the component that is most often neglected by trainees and coaches alike. Without a good nutrition plan you cannot expect results, even if you have the best training. I am talking here about science-based nutrition and not some type of all-you-can-eat bacon diet. Finally, work hard, but smart! More is not better! Working out smart is always better."

The combination of good mental attitude, good nutrition plan and good training program is a failsafe strategy, says DiAngelo. The key to remaining on-track is discovering how to unlock personal motivation.

"Your mind is the most powerful weapon you have. If you really want to maximize your potential and reach the goals you've set for yourself, then you have to start today to train yourself mentally as well as physically! Without the right mindset and mental strategies you are lost and your goals are out of reach. The mind is a great tool to achieve our fitness goals, if we know how to use it in our favor... Everything starts within you."

How to Keep Your January Resolve All-Year Round:

Lisa Westlake suggests the following strategies:

- **Personal customization:** "Listen to your body. Fitness programs must be designed to suit your needs, likes and specific circumstances. Choose a mixture of activities and be sure to vary the activities to avoid stress or strain on any one body part. Mix mobility, cardio fitness, strength and stretching for a healthy, well-balanced fitness regime. Progress gradually. Too much, too soon, too fast will only set you up for injury or failure. Step-by-step progression is the answer... 'Small steps make for big change.'"
- **Rely on professional instruction and guidance:** "I believe that everyone can benefit from exercise. The important thing is that each and every person has the right program for them... and in many cases this requires professional advice to ensure enhancement of health and fitness without aggravation of conditions."
- **Exercise according to your weakest link:** "If you have a condition or injury you must address, consider that first. If you have pelvic-floor problems then high-impact exercise will only make it worse. Don't ignore it—get advice and exercises to assist and be sure your regular fitness is designed to assist not aggravate. Same if you have joint injury or an illness. Exercise can help, but you may need some advice to be sure you're selecting appropriately."
- **Have fun:** "Exercise need not be serious. So long as it's effective in achieving goals, then the more fun the better. I'm thrilled to see more people joining casual circus classes, dance classes and simply having fun whilst being active. My corporate work now includes the same things as my kids classes...games, juggling, hula-hoop and tumbling. Variety is the spice of life and laughter is the best motivator of all time."

"All exercises are good. Do them all. Always try different exercises," says DiAngelo. "I'll share my small secret: Muscle is an adaptive tissue. There is no best-training technique, or a best diet. What works for one person won't necessarily work for you. That's why you have to change your training and diet if you want to see progress. Never adapt. Always challenge yourself. That's the key to success."



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Before attempting any exercise or diet modification, always consult a fitness or medical professional.
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