

New Year kick-start

Introduction

The New Year often suggests the concept of 'New Year's resolutions' and prompts a review of one's daily life. It also invites one to reassess their priorities and to refocus on what is most important.

Many people make promises to make drastic changes to their lifestyle, diet or outlook. In some, this often lasts a few short days and then they find themselves unfortunately slowly resuming old habits. This often deters the prospect of change and promotes repetition of the old without the reward of the new.

As such, it is a perfect opportunity to not lose the momentum of the beginning of the year. It is a wonderful time to take this opportunity and reassess your life. This will help you to prioritise the coming year, and to ensure that this year, will be your best year yet.

Starting the New Year with renewed health

Overview

When considering a kick-start to the body, there are a few key areas to consider. I have broken them into specific sections that will undoubtedly prompt a few questions. Please look over the relevant sections and consider making comments as to your personal feelings regarding each section. Please consider the following:

Step 1

The first step is to ask yourself if this particular area provides you with fulfilment. Are there any aspects of this component that you would like to change? Changes can be modifications, alterations and/or additions.

Step 2

Is change in this area realistic at this time? How will these changes affect those around you? What support will you require from friends and family?

If life is very busy, what simple steps can you develop to begin making changes? Remember that small changes are better than no changes.

Step 3

Do you require any professional assistance to foster this change? If so, are you aware of your options? A good idea is to speak to your health professionals for professional advice and recommendations.

Certain aspects of the self-assessment will require professional assistance, whilst some will be possible to achieve on your own. Remember that intention and achieving your desired changes are more important than how you get there. Sometimes assistance is invaluable and can make the journey much simpler.

Step 4

Visualise how you will feel when the changes have materialised. It is important to constantly remind yourself what your objective is to ensure its success.

Step 5

Begin - we all need to start somewhere. Any change is better than no change. Sometimes we simply have to be honest with ourselves, reflect, consider and clearly outline our hopes and wishes. Having clear direction invites new beginnings.

Assessing one's life

Home

One's home is their sanctuary. It typically reflects their inner-world. Spend some time to reflect on the space you call your home and ask yourself the following:

- Do you enjoy spending time at home?
- Is it free from clutter and mess?
- Are you able to relax in your home environment?

Relationships

It is the people in our lives that contribute to our happiness in a multitude of ways. Whilst many consider 2008 to be a year for the self; it will certainly be a year to explore new friendships from a higher level of individuality. It is important that you assess and ask yourself if you have fulfilment and satisfaction from your relationships in your life.

- Partner, friends, family, work colleagues

Finances

Financial health should not be ignored nor underestimated. Added stress of financial instability will undoubtedly affect multiple areas of your life. It is important to be honest with your financial position to enable growth, change and future security.

- Does your financial status accurately reflect your level of work and effort you give?
- Are you in a healthy financial position?
- Do you experience undue stress from your finances?

The Self

We are creatures that thrive on knowledge and growth. Without personal fulfilment and growth our lives become meaningless and depression and apathy can quickly set in. Consider the following aspects of your life and spend time thinking of ways to improve these key areas.

- Learning and hobbies
- Personal growth and self fulfilment

Career

Our careers enable ourselves to spend time achieving, exploring and discovering areas of self-interest with financial reward to accomplish other needs.

- Does your career enable you to achieve these goals?
- Does it accurately reflect how you choose to spend your time?

Community

A sense of belonging provides us with purpose and fulfilment.

- What is your contribution to your community?
- Do you feel part of the wider community?

Lifestyle

We are ultimately at our peak when our lifestyle supports recreation, stimulation, relaxation, exercise and sufficient rest.

The ideal week should ensure a day of total rest i.e. 'The Sabbath'; a day of socialising and spending time with one's family and friends; and sufficient time for self-fulfilment.

Daily activities should incorporate time for exercise, relaxation, recreation, sleep, cooking, eating and work. Bernhard Jensen (Traditional Naturopath, founder of Iridology) believed that each day should consist of 8 hours sleep, 8 hours work and 8 hours rest and relaxation.

The Body

The main areas that require review are the following. Please note that these are general indicators of health. If you have a pre-existing condition, it will obviously affect different parts of your health.

Digestion

- Do you assimilate foods easily?
- Is digestion effortless and symptom free?

Detoxification

- Have you had excessive alcohol, fatty foods over the Christmas/NY period?
- When drinking alcohol, do you experience strong negative effects?
- Have you any excess weight you wish to shed?
- Do you experience any allergies or strong negative effects from foods, beverages, chemicals, odours or environments?

Elimination and Excretion

- Do you experience strong body odour?
- Are you sufficiently hydrated?
- Is your urine dark in colour with a strong odour?
- Are you experiencing any skin breakouts?

Energy Levels

- Do your energy levels fluctuate throughout the day?

Sleep

- Do you receive enough good quality sleep per night?
- Do you wake rested and recharged?

Concentration and Clarity

- Is your concentration and clarity of thought at the level you desire?

Fitness

- Are you experiencing your peak level of fitness?
- Do you enjoy sport and exercise?
- Have you discovered your body's innate strength?

Emotional Health

- Do you experience many mood fluctuations?
- Do you experience strong negative emotions?
- Are you as happy as you'd wish?
- What are your stress levels?

Specific systems

- Considering all systems of the body, are they functioning at their optimum?

Change is as good as a holiday

Simple Changes for all areas of your life

Making changes to one's life is easy provided that the steps taken are simple, easy to adopt and realistic for your individual circumstances. Remember that it is better to make and achieve small changes rather than make unrealistic expectations that are impossible.

Making changes

Start by making simple changes to your health that will have a ripple effect on all other aspects of your life. It certainly sounds simplistic, however, we all know that if we feel energised, centred and happy that all areas of our lives simultaneously improve. Remember the last time you felt full of health and vitality? It is with this feeling that you will feel as though you have the energy and inclination to improve your life holistically.

Health Tips

A few key points to consider:

- Respect your body with what you put into your mouth. If it doesn't feel as though your body will benefit from it, it is best avoided.
- Respect your body with the environments and people you surround yourself with
- Eat when you are hungry and only what you require to function at your optimum
- Connect to the idea of eating what 'gives you energy' rather than what 'takes energy to assimilate'
- Hydrate even when not thirsty with pure spring water
- Ensure you have a minimum of 8 hour restful sleep per night
- Avoid anything you have a 'need' for - food addictions are too common and suggest an imbalance
- If your weight does not reflect your healthiest body, look at why this may be so. Weight loss or gain can indicate a number of factors from what is consumed, lack of exercise, hormonal imbalances, emotional issues, excessive stress and others.
- Learn to rotate foods & not over consume the same type of foods on a regular basis.
- Remember to enjoy eating again. Have a colourful meal that is rich in nutritional value & flavour. Take pleasure in preparing wholesome meals that you will enjoy eating as food is nourishment for life. Digestion starts in your brain so think about what you are going to eat and enjoy eating.
- Chew your food carefully and slowly.
- Partake in regular aerobic exercise for 1/2 - 1 hour every day.

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