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WELLNESS WISDOM YOU CAN TRUST

Wellbeing



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and Renew
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Get moving

Get moving in 2022



It's never too late to start exercising regularly, says top personal trainer Michael Garry, but consistency is key. Here he shares his tried-and-tested tips for getting into shape sharpish.



If exercising regularly has never been part of your life, or you've fallen out of the habit in recent years, the New Year brings a fresh opportunity to get moving. The evidence couldn't be clearer that it's one of the very best things we can do for our wellbeing.

Exercise can boost mood and energy levels, help us shed excess body fat and reduce our risk of major illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, Type-2 diabetes and cancer. Research even shows that physical activity can boost our self-esteem and sleep quality, as well as helping to ward off stress, depression, Alzheimer's and dementia. And it's brilliant for fortifying our bones too. It's very easy to get started and may take far less effort than you think.

'Many people actually go wrong in the beginning due to over-enthusiasm,' says leading personal trainer Michael Garry (michaelgarry.london). 'They'll train five or six days a week, get injured and then need three months to recover – that's three months completely wasted.'

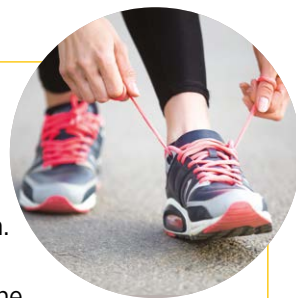
Michael has seen time and time again with clients that the secret to sustainable success is to start low and slow, and focus on the most efficient strength-building exercises above all else. Here are his seven top tips for exercise success to start your New Year on the right foot.

1 Focus on consistency

Your number one goal in the early stages should be consistency, not how you look or anything else. If you aim to be consistent from this January to the following January then everything else will fall into place. We only have a certain amount of willpower. After Christmas lots of people say, 'I'm going to give up sugar, I'm going to give up alcohol and I'm going to start training.' But that's a hell of a lot of pressure to put on yourself. It's best to keep your goals fairly small and build from there. When it comes to exercise, start by training twice a week for the first six weeks just to build that routine.

2 Shop smart

A good pair of trainers is the number one thing you should invest your money in. As far as clothes are concerned, whatever you have at home at the moment is perfectly fine. After Christmas, 80% of people try to lose weight. If this is your goal then there's no point investing in new training gear when you're going to lose weight and will need to buy new kit in three months' time.



Squats

3 Focus on strength

Choosing the right type of exercise for your goals is important. A lot of people begin with running because they see slim runners and assume they need to replicate this to get a figure like that. But we don't see all the other things that are involved with staying lean. You don't need to spend five, six or seven hours a week on the treadmill, you just need to do two to three good-quality hours of strength-building exercises a week. These should include squats, core and upper body exercises, so that when you start to do the aerobic exercise (either running or cycling) your body is strong and can absorb the impact.



Push-ups

Start with these simple exercises that can be done at home, in the park or at the gym.

PUSH-UPS

Set yourself into a high plank position, hands and toes on the floor. You can place your knees on the floor to make this exercise easier. Lower your chest slowly to the floor. Pause, then push up through your palms, straightening your arms and lifting your chest until you return to your starting position.

SQUATS

Stand with your head facing forwards and your chest held up and out, feet shoulder-width apart. Sit back and down as though sitting into a chair. Knees should be at 90 degrees to the hips.



CRUNCHES

Keep arms to your side or crossed on your chest. Avoid putting hands behind your head to help avoid neck strain. Exhale as you lift the upper body towards your knees and inhale as you lie back.



PLANK

For a forearm plank, keep elbows aligned with shoulders, and forearms parallel to the body, shoulder-width apart. Planks can be performed with knees on the ground (easier, good for beginners) and/or with straight arms. Build up the amount of time you can hold this position, aiming for 60-90 seconds.



4 MORNING MOVEMENT

Not choosing a specific time of day to exercise is one of the main reasons people fall off track. I recommend first thing in the morning as there's fewer things threatening to interfere with your plans at this time of day. If you exercise in the evening you can easily be put off by a bad day at work or because you've not digested your food properly and get a stitch. In the morning you can just get up, get out and get your workout done first thing.



5 Diet matters

We can't rely on exercise and weight-training alone if we want to shift body fat and resculpt the body. Watching what we eat is key for losing fat, and eating plenty of high-quality protein is important for building muscle strength. These proteins can include eggs, lean meats (unprocessed), chicken, fish, dairy produce (including yoghurt and kefir), nuts, seeds, beans and soy products such as tofu. If weight loss is your goal I always recommend eating two meals a day (brunch and an evening meal).

6 Stretch for success

Stretching is the secret to staying strong, pain-free and mobile. It makes exercise more comfortable, improves our posture and prevents injury. Try these simple stretches, both before and after exercise.

SIMPLE STRETCHES

QUAD STRETCH

Stand tall, bend your right knee behind you and catch the foot with your right hand. Draw your foot up towards your bottom, keeping the right thigh in line with the front of the left thigh. Draw your tummy button in towards the spine to strengthen your core. Use the back of a chair for balance if needed and hold for 30 seconds.

LOWER SPINE STRETCH



Lying on the floor, bend both knees in towards the chest before gently lowering to one side, then the other. Keep arms outstretched with palms facing

upwards, keeping both shoulders on the floor as you twist. Repeat ten times on each side.



Quad stretch



HAMSTRING STRETCH

This stretch is easy to do lying down, using a wall or doorway for support. Get your bottom as close to the wall as possible, while extending one leg upwards – as straight as you can. Hold, breathing deeply into the stretch as you straighten.



7 Try a trainer
If you know that you've tried time and time again, and failed to develop an exercise routine, booking an hour with a personal trainer each week can really help. That way you'll have someone to help keep you motivated and who can make sure you're doing all the exercises correctly.

Get moving



Andrea's story

Andrea Keey is proof that it's never too late to get active. At the remarkable age of 81, she started working with Michael seven months ago after a hip replacement. Every week without fail she can be spotted in the park bright and early doing squats and skipping with confidence. 'It's just brilliant,' she says. 'Working with a trainer really makes you want to do well and push yourself. I can now carry heavy suitcases and feel much stronger. I look forward to my sessions with Michael and try to do plenty of squats throughout the week at home. It's been a miracle.'

LIZ ADDS

Of all my life-choices, working out on a regular basis has been one of the most rewarding, both for my physical health as well as mental headspace. During many years of relationship issues, business stresses and family crises, pushing my body into some stress-busting activity has been a life-changer. So good for sleep, as well as for my mental health and resilience, too. I'm stronger, leaner and fitter in my fifties than I ever was in my forties, or even thirties. I'm a great believer that it's never too late to make a difference to how you look and feel by getting fitter.