



FEATURE



It's a new year, a new decade in fact. So what's different and how do we want to feel in 2010? While every magazine, TV advert and newspaper claims to hold the secrets to vitality, success and achieving that dream weight, we all know that in reality it's going to take more than some supposedly magical yogurt or post-it notes on the biscuit tin to keep us on track. There's nothing like broken promises and failed resolutions to get us down and make us feel out of control, so this year, instead of torturing ourselves let's ditch the guilt and focus on feeling good.

New Year's resolution:

Get up early every morning to go to the gym.

New Year's reality:

Small changes that fit in with your lifestyle are far more likely to stand the test of time and help you feel more positive. Even the best intentions can crumble after a bad day at work or a traditional British downpour, so try taking small steps:

- A lunch time walk can help keep the energy levels up, so try getting out for 15 or 20 minutes, two or three times a week.
- If it helps to set yourself a goal, try buying a pedometer and see how quickly the steps add up if you make even small changes, like taking the stairs or walking up the escalators.
- If you want to get out or exercise at home but can't seem to get off the sofa,

set yourself the small goal of just getting up and getting changed, nothing more. Once you're up and you've got your trainers on you're far more likely to see it through, and if you still don't make it congratulate yourself for getting that far and for wanting to make a positive change.

New Year's resolution:

Eat five portions of fruit or veg every day.

New Year's reality:

We all know this is what we should be aiming for if we want to stay healthy, but if you usually struggle to manage 2 or 3 a day it's unlikely that come January you'll miraculously start wanting more. Instead of pondering over expensive smoothies or buying mountains of fruit that ends up rotting at the back of the fridge, why not try introducing new foods to your weekly shop to make your diet more varied:

- Check out the free recipe cards stocked by some supermarkets, usually by the tills. They usually include cheap and easy ways to make veg more interesting, and trying a new one every week or so can help to keep you inspired.
- Alternatively, instead of driving to the supermarket why not walk to your local greengrocer or corner shop. We usually end up buying the same old things because we're stuck in the same old routine, but a change of scene can help you to try new foods as well as fitting in a bit of exercise at

the same time.

- Think about the colours you're putting on your plate; are your foods mostly beige, cream or brown? The more varied the colours the more likely you are to be getting a variety of vitamins and nutrients, so treat yourself to some deep reds, bright greens and oranges or luscious pinks and purples.

New Year's resolution:

Lose weight in time for summer/holiday/ party.

New Year's reality:

Post Christmas blues can leave us feeling sluggish and bloated, but heaps of self loathing and drastic targets aren't the way out:

- Think about previous weight loss plans or diets; which bits made you feel good, what foods did you enjoy and what worked best for you? Instead of embarking on a drastic diet plan or slavishly following the latest guru, congratulate yourself on achievements you've already made and let them inspire you.
- Make a plan, keep a diary and reflect on what you've done well. Remember to reward yourself and also allow yourself the odd setback - every day will be different.
- Try and avoid the bathroom scales. Subjecting ourselves to daily weigh-ins can make us feel anxious and full of regret, and it's easy to get bogged down and overwhelmed by numbers, so keep the bigger picture in mind.

