

10 Tricks for Tackling Health in 2014

It's easy to slip off track with our health goals during the holiday season, but the New Year is the perfect time for a fresh start. Whatever your fitness level or weight-loss goals, try incorporating one or two of these smart tricks to help you speed your results.

1. **Become "breathless".** Regardless of what types of activities you normally do, make sure to fit in cardio at least twice a week. While less aerobic activities, like yoga or weight lifting, have countless benefits, workouts that leave you breathless help jumpstart your metabolism and drop weight more quickly.
2. **Mix it up.** Some people think we're more likely to stick to a program if we create a weekly schedule and stick to it. Not me. Our lives are too hectic. Instead of committing to a specific routine – Monday night spinning, Tuesday night yoga, Wednesday night kickboxing, and so on – commit to exercising a certain number of times per week. One week you might take three morning Pilates classes, while the next week, you can only fit in lunchtime Spinning classes. This way, just because you miss your favorite workout, you don't skip the gym altogether.
3. **Add movement, whenever, wherever.** Movement is more about a lifestyle, rather than an hour-a-day commitment in a class or at the gym. It's about squeezing in health every chance you get. Here are a few tricks I love: Take a walk when you're bored. Walk home after work, the gym or dinner out instead of taking a cab or train. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk up the escalator in stores. Use bathrooms on different floors at work. Get lunch from a place further away and opt for take-out,

not delivery.

4. **Book one "Surprise Myself" exercise class each week.** After I reach my workout goal for the week, I add one more class I didn't plan on taking. I think about it as 'treat' to my health! It varies. Some weeks, I'll take a new instructor; other weeks, I'll try something completely different. I burn more calories and always find new activities I love. If surprising myself doesn't happen, I don't get discouraged because I've already hit my targets.
5. **Upgrade your salads.** Take your health up a notch by not wasting your time on romaine or mixed greens. The smarter choice? Kale, spinach, arugula and watercress, which are higher in vitamins and minerals. One you've got your base, load it with nutrient- and fiber-dense vegetables. You'll get fuller faster and cut down your calories without feeling deprived. I top mine with flax seed or extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice and herbs, rather than dressings especially when I don't know what's in them!
6. **Make veggies your main plate.** Most people follow the formula: choose your protein then build side dishes around it. I say flip the model and pick your produce first. Start with roasted veggies, salad or veggie soup, then top them with grilled chicken, poached salmon or a cup of whole grain like quinoa. Finally, use spices and herbs to jazz up flavor, rather than butter and salt. It's a great way to try new vegetables or taste combinations, rather than stick with the traditional, boring and tasteless romaine with tomatoes combo (I couldn't stick with that menu either!). Nearly all my clients start with this easy strategy to jumpstart weight loss.
7. **Keep it simple in the kitchen.** It doesn't take a culinary degree, a library of cookbooks or a pantry filled with high-tech gadgets to make a fantastic and healthy meal. Look for simple recipes that call for what

you already have in the kitchen or require 5 or fewer ingredients. If you need inspiration, try this trick: Next time you buy fish, ask the salesperson for their fastest, easiest, most flavorful preparation. Same strategy goes with dining out and delivery. Choose entrees with the fewest ingredients and simplest preparation, like grilled fish or chicken with no sauce. Cutting down on just two restaurant meals a week will dramatically change how you look and feel.

8. **Don't listen to your mother (when it comes to eating!).** Sorry, mom, but we don't have to finish what's on our plate. That's the fast track to weight gain. After a meal, you should leave feeling energized from your food, rather than lethargic and stuffed. My favorite trick? I stop eating when I feel that if I had to get up and take an easy exercise class, I could handle it. That's pretty easy to do when you eat slowly, sitting down (versus on your commute) and with the TV off.
9. **Keep healthy snacks ready to go.** Stash them everywhere you might need to nosh – your gym bag, your office, your handbag, your apartment. Snacking between meals keeps your metabolism revved and blood sugar levels balanced. Plus, when you get to meals feeling like you can eat like a horse, you usually do! Opt for raw vegetables and fresh fruit instead of processed bodega snacks. Or, make your own trail mix and divide it into small storage bags. I mix cocoa nibs, dried fruit, raw almonds and raw cashews. Sometimes I don't feel hungry, but if it's there, it's much better than grabbing a bag of chips or a high-calorie, processed bar.
10. **Remember your motivation.** Why do want to lose weight? To look better in your clothes? To feel more energetic? Or to simply improve your overall health? First, get clear about what you want, and then use that desire to inspire you throughout your journey. Train your brain to think positively and don't let negativity mess with your health (or your head!). Next, eliminate the phrase "I

can't" and replace it with a phrase that says, "I can and I will." Use this mantra to stay on track. Mine is "I can do this – I am living the Smart Life." Whenever I start making excuses to skip a workout or cheat on my diet, I say my mantra aloud and instantly feel energized.

What I learned about my health in 2013...

We all eat, all day and every day, yet for some reason so many people are confused about food. What fascinates me about being a health coach is seeing how we truly are what we eat and how the key to health is each person's individual needs. What I noticed this year with my Smart Life clients is the more they improve their health, the more empowered they feel to pursue the life they want to live.

As I reflect back over the year, I'm inspired by all the changes and epiphanies my clients have shared with me as they've begun to live a Smart Life. I've shared some below and hopefully they'll inspire you, too, as you set new challenges for yourself in 2014.

What I learned about my health in 2013 ...

"... That I have much more control over my health than I ever imagined! I also learned that prioritizing my health truly

does make a difference in other areas of my life.”

“... A radical new way to look at food. This year I turned 59 and there was no way I wanted to enter my sixth decade as a fat, tired woman. With Ronit’s help, I’ve tried new foods and adopted different diet strategies. Not only have I lost weight, but I have gained so much valuable information on how to eat healthier. I’m eating “smarter” today than ever.”

“... To say goodbye to my Weight Watchers app and stop counting calories! I learned to eat healthy whole foods and not only did I finally lose the weight, I also gained freedom from the annoyance of counting points and calories.”

“ ... Small changes add up to big results. Adopting a healthier lifestyle can seem daunting and impossible, but adding just one simple change every week adds up over the course of a year. I’ve made small changes in my diet and exercise routines one step at a time. It’s been as simple as adding 10 minutes to my workout, choosing to reduce the amount of animal protein I consume in a week or switching to organic produce. Just one change per week allowed me to embrace a healthier lifestyle. The physical changes were enormous. I look better, but more important, I’m much healthier than I was two years ago with more energy and stamina than I had 10 years ago!”

“ ... How much health and happiness go hand in hand. When I made smarter choices about my diet, my mood changed drastically. I felt better about myself and that confidence improved my relationships and my productivity at work. Those little successes kept me motivated to stick with it. The better I felt the healthier I wanted to be.”

“ ... Staying connected to people who inspire me is important in keeping my goals top of mind. Being part of the Smart Life community not only empowers me but it holds me responsible to me and reminds me to put myself first.”

“...2013 has been a wake up call for me.... I learned that the

most important thing in life is to take care of myself. With Ronit's help, I learned how to nourish my body with whole foods and plenty of fresh vegetables. Trying new spices, herbs and simpler ways of cooking made choosing new foods a breeze. Bring on 2014...I am ready!!!"

You Want it? Be Smart and Make it Happen

Two friends are chatting about their diets. The first one says, "*I want to be healthy and feel great.*" The second one says, "*I intend to be healthy and feel great.*"

Which one do you think is going to get healthy and feel great? Yup – the one who intends it.

Wanting is simply *wishing* you can have or do a particular thing it. *Intending* means you're committed to achieving something by making a plan for success—and sticking to it!

The Fuel for Desired Results

The key to intention is action – try this to build your intention muscle:

- Get clear on what you want. Create a vision board by gathering images and words that pertain to your goal, and gluing them onto a large piece of construction paper. Hang the collage in a spot where you'll see it often.

- Do something to make your desire happen. Let's say you want to eat four servings of vegetables a day. Your first action may be to go to a farmers' market and purchase a few veggies you can cook for dinner.
- Celebrate your achievement! Don't forget to congratulate yourself for meeting your goal.

How to Have a Great Day... Every Day!

Did you know that you can even set an intention to have a great day?

Rather than diving into your morning and hoping you'll achieve your day's big goal, why not take a moment and set yourself up for success?

Try this **"Setting An Intention to Succeed"** exercise used by professional athletes, speakers, politicians, and performers:

- Upon waking, lie in bed and think about what you have planned for your day (or, find a quiet spot to sit and contemplate).
- Think about your desired outcome. Take a deep breath and visualize yourself succeeding.
- Replay your success several times in your mind.
- Next, add other senses, including sounds, smells, and touch. For instance, as you replay your success, you now also hear the director offering you the gig, or you feel the physical sensation of your finger hitting the "send" button on your latest assignment.
- Lastly, replay the scene again, adding emotions. Feel your elation at getting the part, or your pride at finally finishing your work.

You can perform An Intention to Succeed, throughout the day as desired.

Get even healthier – Begin your transformation!

Do you intend to lose weight, eat healthy, and feel fantastic? Make a plan to succeed by getting the support you need! As a Health Coach, I specialize in helping people make their own healthy changes. Ready to get started living the Smart Life? Schedule a FREE One Hour Consultation with me today—or pass this offer on to someone you care about!

Smart Life Stays Inspired, Too!

In May 2013, I attended my first IIN Live Event in NYC. This event brings together current IIN students for an inspiring, motivational and educational weekend. Joshua Rosenthal, the founder of Integrative Nutrition, brings together nutrition and health experts from all areas of wellness and health. Joshua's inspirational exercises and discussions were woven among lectures from guest experts, almost magically transforming students into health coaches!

I left this conference even more excited about my decision to evolve my psychology career into health coaching. From Andrew Weil and Dan Buettner to Donna Gates and Joe Cross, each speaker inspired me to spread the knowledge of how the way we nourish our bodies can heal us, transform us and help us achieve our goals and prevent illness. I felt blessed to be surrounded by so many caring, soul-centered people who share my vision to transform the world by transforming our lifestyle. At IIN live, I was touched by a "...ripple effect to transform the world!" I'm ready to share that ripple effect with you!