

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!!!"

Butternut Squash Soup

This healthy, vegan, and gluten-free soup is one of the easiest soups to make. It is delicious, warming, and it helps me feel aligned with the Fall-Winter season. When I make it, I make sure to double the amounts and freeze half in smaller mason jars for lunch or dinner appetizers on wintery days when I crave that cozy, nurtured feeling.

- 2 butternut squash cut into 2" cubes
- 2 containers of organic vegetable broth (add more broth to cover vegetables)
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 parsnips, sliced
- 1 large spanish onion, diced
- 2 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- pinch of nutmeg
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

In a large pot, sauté diced onion and chopped carrots for about 3 minutes.

Add squash, parsnips and vegetable broth to cover vegetables. Bring to boil and lower heat immediately.

Add fresh sage, turmeric, nutmeg, sea salt and pepper to taste and cook until tender, about 20 minutes.

Let cool a bit and pour mixture into a blender (or use a hand blender) and pureé the soup until smooth.

Garnish with your favorite herb and pumpkin or sunflower seeds.

Butternut squash contains many vital poly-phenolic anti-oxidants and vitamins. It is a rich source of dietary fiber and phyto-nutrients. Squash is one of the common low-calorie vegetables recommended by dieticians in cholesterol controlling and weight reduction programs. It is high in vitamin-A , providing about 354% of RDA. Vitamin A is a powerful natural anti-oxidant and is required by the body for maintaining the integrity of skin and mucus membranes. It is also an essential vitamin for good eye-sight. Research studies suggest that natural foods rich in vitamin A help the body protected against lung and oral cavity cancers.

Protein-Packed Plant Diets That Work

Most people think steak, chicken or fish when they think of protein-packed meals. That's not the entire truth. And unfortunately, this myth is fueled by a healthy meat industry that profits when you buy their propaganda. Turns out, a plant-based diet can pack the same punch as other sources. A complete protein is one that contains all nine essential amino

acids that you need to consume through food: histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine.

Try these 3 tricks for the ultimate protein-packed plant diet:

1. **Eat a variety of whole foods.** Loading your diet with different vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, peas, beans, legumes and fruits optimizes the amount of the nine essential amino acids you're giving your body. The World Health Organization recommends that 5 percent of our daily calories (a little more if we training or working out) come from protein. On average, fruits have about 5 percent of their calories from protein. Vegetables, 20 to 50 percent. Sprouted seeds, beans and grains, 10 to 25 percent.
2. **Eat more raw foods.** Studies have shown that baking or grilling makes about half of the protein in the food unusable to the human body. Raw or living proteins are an even better source than cooked plant foods. We need 25 to 35 grams of protein a day. That means that if you eat 2,000 calories per day of raw plant foods containing average of 10 percent of their calories from protein, you would get 200 calories worth of protein, or 50 grams. This is more than adequate to support great health. Optimize your intake of raw foods by adding a fresh raw vegetable salad to every meal.
3. **Eat more superfoods: Plant-based sources of complete protein** are referred to as 'superfoods' and they're easily obtainable from supermarkets, health food stores and online. They include:
 - Hemp seeds
 - Quinoa
 - Amaranth
 - Buckwheat
 - Bee pollen
 - Goji berries

- Chia seeds
 - Flax seeds
 - Spirulina and chlorella
 - Dulse (a sea vegetable)
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5 Reasons to Love Quinoa

Quinoa may be a super food, but most people don't find it super interesting. I disagree! It packs the same amount of protein per serving as milk, while giving you loads of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. It can easily stand alone in meals or be incorporated into a variety of healthy and flavorful recipes.

Not convinced to put this powerful grain into your meal rotation yet? Maybe these five reasons will change your mind:

1. **It super fuels your body with energy.** Cooked quinoa contains approximately 8 grams of protein per cup, according to the USDA. It's also one of the few vegetarian complete proteins, meaning it contains all 9 essential amino acids your body needs. Try it for breakfast or lunch to help you power through tough afternoon workouts or long days at work.
2. **It stimulates healthy digestion.** One cup of quinoa contains a healthy serving of 5 grams of fiber, which improves digestion, lowers cholesterol levels, controls blood sugar and helps you maintain a healthy weight.
3. **It's a nutrient-dense food.** Quinoa is an amazing source of iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium, folate (a B vitamin) and more. In fact, a recent study showed that the grain contains the same concentrated amounts of two flavonoids, quercetin and kaempferol, as found in

antioxidant-rich berries like cranberries and lionberries.

4. **It's naturally low in calories.** One cup of quinoa boasts just 222 calories. Because of its high levels of protein and fiber, this healthy carbohydrate doesn't convert quickly to sugar in your body. This means it doesn't spike your blood sugar levels and keeps you feeling fuller longer.
5. **It's a versatile grain.** Breakfast, lunch and dinner? Check, check and check! Quinoa can be prepared in delicious ways at all mealtimes. And research has shown that this superfood's nutrient profile isn't compromised by boiling, steaming or simmering. Toss it in salads, stir-fries, soup and porridge, or shape it into a veggie burger or a sushi roll.

10 Tricks that Speed Weight Loss

When you're trying to drop pounds, these healthy tips may help you shed them faster. Try one or two! All you've got to lose is weight.

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!

Probiotics? Prebiotics? What are the benefits and how do we pick one?

Doron Kahana, M.D., CPNS

There's been a lot of hype recently about the benefits of probiotics and prebiotics. And rightly so, these healthy bacteria keep our digestive system balanced, healthy and in optimal condition. When our digestive system works like it should, many symptoms and issues disappear. This month, I invited guest blogger, Doron Kahana, MD, CPNS to help me bring the best advice for Smart Life readers.

Sure, they're both "Biotics", but what do "Pro" and "Pre" mean?

Probiotics are live microorganisms that benefit your body. Usually either bacteria or yeast, they boost immunity, aid digestion and promote regularity. If it sounds strange to consume "good bacteria" to stay healthy, consider that more than 400 different types of happy bacteria already live in your GI tract. No joke.

Prebiotics are functional foods that can be used by healthy bacteria for nourishment. A fancy word for fiber, prebiotics promote a healthy microecology, or the composition of the intestinal microflora, in our body. Prebiotics are naturally found in onions, garlic, flaxseeds, whole-grain breads, beans and other high-fiber foods.

Probiotic benefits

I recommend probiotics because they are preventive powerhouses that enhance digestion, strengthen the immune system, rev the

metabolism, and ensure detoxification and elimination. Not bad, huh? Especially because the safety profile of probiotics is excellent, with minimal adverse effects reported even with very large doses.

The 3 most common issues

Researchers believe we're only beginning to discover how valuable pre- and probiotics can be to our bodies. Whether or not you're prone to the conditions below, consider that many things – stress, anxiety, fatigue, junk food – can put a strain on our system. Here are just a few benefits:

1. It treats UTIs, vaginitis and yeast infections. These conditions arise when there's an imbalance in good and bad bacteria. Probiotics, when taken daily, regulate the balance so unhealthy situations don't spring up.
2. It reduces the severity and frequency of colds. Healthy bacteria bolster your immune system and keep sickness at bay.
3. It alleviates constipation, diarrhea and IBS. Studies have shown probiotics are a natural and effective way to reduce and/or eliminate the symptoms like pain, bloating, discomfort and irregular bowel movements.

How to pick a Probiotic

Before buying, determine:

- **What type of bacteria it contains**, including the genus (first letter/word) and species (second word). Some types include: *L. acidophilus*, *L. bulgaricus*, *L. casei*, *L. gasseri*, *L. plantarum*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *B. lactis*, *B. longum*, *Saccharomyces boulardii*. The more types of bacteria, the better, since different strains benefit your body in different ways.
- **How many bacteria per dose it contains**. You want at least 2 to 10 billion. If a brand doesn't list

potency, that's a red flag not to buy. *S. boulardii* may sometime be listed in milligrams, choose 250 mg or more.

- **How pure is the dose.** Does it have additives or unhealthy bacteria? The cultivation and purification process varies considerably. Some higher grade products will request that you keep the probiotics refrigerated, others will be blister-packed to ensure freshness. Except for *S. boulardii*, which has a darker, sandy color, probiotics should look white (like sugar). Expect the scent and taste to be pleasant and not offensive.
 - **What research or reviews say about the product.** ConsumerLab.com, for example, is an excellent resource for finding out which supplements are effective. Stay with reputable brands and shy away from discount offers. In this instance, there's a reason they're on sale. Good quality probiotics usually cost upward of \$1 a day.
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Super Healthy Kale Salad

This makes for a super healthy salad that you can prepare in advance and enjoy for a couple of days. I adapted it from Crazy Sexy Kitchen by Kris Carr & Chef Chad Sarno. You can serve it solo, with your favorite cooked grain, or wrapped in nori. When I have guests, I like to serve it wrapped in a cucumber slice and topped with sprouted sunflower seeds. Its a fancy and super healthy start to your meal!

- 1 bunch kale, any variety, chopped (you can all

mix varieties)

- 2 cups diced bell peppers, red, yellow, and orange
- 1/2 cup chopped parsely
- 1 1/2 avocados, pit removed and chopped
- 2 tablespoons flax oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- sea salt, to taste
- pinch of cayenne, to taste
- sprouted sunflower seeds

In a bowl, combine all the ingredients. Massage and mix with your hands to “wilt” the kale and cream the avocado. Serve and enjoy!

Newsletter October 2013 Issue

This month, the Smart Life Newsletter includes even more information about making smarter choices about nutrition and lifestyle that will help you live the life you want. A blog by guest contributor, Doron Kahana, M.D., PCNS, founder of Center for Digestive Health & Nutritional Excellence, shares with Smart Life readers how Prebiotics and Probiotics boost our immune system, aid digestion, and promote regularity.

This month, I share with Smart Life readers my vision for a Smart Life and how the Smart Life logo, created by TLVD, captures everything about my approach to health coaching.

Looking for tips on getting what you want? Read my blog You Want it? Get Smart and Make it Happen and learn how to set your intention and make your goals a reality.

Two great recipes this month feature my favorite super green, Kale, which is high in fiber, acts as a powerful detoxifier,

and is packed with nutrients. Try my Super Healthy Kale Salad and the nourishing fall Kale & Lentil Soup that makes me feel good any time of year.

Did I mention that the early bird catches the free gifts? Be one of the first 10 to sign up for Smart Life's Monthly Newsletter, and you'll receive 10% off of your Smart Life Health Coaching program of choice.

By signing up for the Smart Life Newsletter you can receive the latest tips, tricks and tools for weight loss, fitness and overall wellness delivered right to your inbox. In each edition to follow, you'll find more seasonal recipes, strategies for helping you reach your health goals and the latest information you need to help you live a happier, healthier life you love.

After you've read the October Edition of the Smart Life Newsletter, ask questions, send comments, and share your feedback on our Smart Life Facebook page or Smart Life website. The Smart Life Newsletter is designed to be a resource you can truly use to improve your health.

Get it today and get smarter about your life!

Stay healthy,

Ronit