

There's a reason most of us need to make fitness resolutions: results from run-of-the-mill regimes don't last. With the experts we have on speed dial, we've sifted the science and facts (you do have to work and don't have a live-in trainer) and hatched a plan that will blast body fat, burn calories 24/7 and bypass barriers to sticking with it past February.

Words: Rebecca Long with Philip Fusco and AJ Govoni

Get a HOT BODY 4eva

New year fitness plans tend to come in two guises: the gruelling ones that work until you can't take it (usually about 24-and-a-half days), and the fun ones that make you feel like you're finally nailing this fitness thing – until you realise four months in that your jeans still don't fit. That was until now, when you finally twig that the faster-is-better mentality is fundamentally flawed. Group 'aha' moment. Like with crash diets (not that we'd, er, know), your body and brain are cued to stage a backlash against *Biggest Loser*-style programs.

Here's why: you will get tired, the scale will stay in the same spot for 13 days, you'll skip a day at the gym, or have fish and chips (hey, you're human, remember?). None of that's a problem, says fitness expert AJ Govoni. Being black and white about it, however, is. "These things tend to cause a fast downward spiral into a sense of failure," says Govoni. Hands up who's turned water weight into a reason to throw in the towel? "It's easy to forget how far you've come, like being able to breeze up two flights of stairs when three weeks ago you were winded after one," Govoni says.

Sydney exercise physiologist Richard Garard says unexpected benefits will fill the void where your thigh-gap obsession used to be. "Keeping fit takes care of not just looking good but feeling good. It really impacts not just one part of your life, but every part of your life, including your relationships and how you interact with others," he says. "When people start taking care of themselves and really prioritising their fitness, they find they've got more energy, their work is a lot better, the quality of their sleep improves along with their sex lives and their level of happiness also benefits from exercise." That's not to say you shouldn't set goals (failing to plan and all that). But contrary to the metrics we've been conditioned to monitor, targets should instead relate to the bigger, long-

term picture. One way to get the focus off the gritty – and dangerous – details (kilojoules, kilograms, kilo-blah blah blah) is to keep a written record of daily accomplishments and positive reinforcements. (Walking to coffee counts.) The other, Govoni says, is to benchmark your progress against how strong, flexible and fast your body is, not how many centimetres your butt cheeks measure. See fitness tests on p. 70.

How it works

Warning: if you believe shaping up needs to feel hard and hurt, this is going to throw you. “Fitness doesn’t have to be torture,” says model-turned-uber trainer Philip Fusco (philcity.com). Rather than condemning you to an hour of cardio a day, this plan is broken into short, manageable workouts that get more done in less time. Because your schedule changes more than Oprah’s dress size, it’s been

put together in modules you can work it to suit your goals and diary. While you can do it quickly for a big event (if your BFF is getting hitched in three weeks we won’t hold it against you), our advice is to treat this like an investment – not an impulse buy. Once you’ve calmed your inner ‘but I want it now’, prioritise. If you really can’t live another month with your body fat percentage, make that first cab. “First decide what it is that you’re looking to change, gain or lose: gain muscle mass, lose weight, become more ‘in shape’ (whatever your definition of that is) or gain stamina,” says Fusco. This bit’s like finding yourself in the middle of David Jones with an unlimited Amex. What you do next will determine whether you succeed or fail. (No, really, listen up.) According to Fusco, fitness plans are won and lost on the strength of goals. “Set short-term, reachable goals for yourself, especially in the first few sessions and/or weeks of going to the gym. Avoid setting yourself up for failure by setting unreasonable goals like looking like that model on Instagram.”

Set goals

You heard at uni, but we’re going to be a broken record: goals need to be

SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-framed). They also need to speak to a broader overall objective – that big picture ‘want’, like having 20 per cent body fat. “Goals should be phrased in this context, like showing up for the number of sessions you originally envisioned for yourself per week, or small progress goals such as losing 1.5 kilos in two weeks or increasing the number of repetitions you can comfortably do,” Fusco says. When that petulant, impatient little voice chimes in saying it knows better – “you know, we really could just skip this bullshit and look like Joanna Krupa in half the time” – keep your eye on a specific goal related to your objective, not the objective itself. It will only make you feel like it’s light years away and undermine your motivation to keep trucking.

Once you’ve got your goals, write them in your diary; while weekly goals give a good time frame for evaluation and will get you up on Thursday morning, if you know you’re impulsive and tend to ‘snap’ into self-sabotage mode, it might be worth setting smaller daily goals as well. You should always have four goals on the go. “Make your chart with at least four goals you can complete and put a check box next to it for when you complete that goal,” Fusco says. “Once you achieve a goal, check it off and write down

a new goal.” When you nail one, treat yourself to a non-food gift to reinforce the value of putting in the yards, Fusco says. Finally, Fusco says, make a vision board and place it somewhere you’ll see it often. (See how to make a vision board that works from p. 48.)

HOME v GYM

“I strongly recommend going to a professional gym vs. working out at your home because you’ll have the opportunity to work with a personal trainer to discuss your individual goals and needs, and being around other people with similar goals will rub off on you. More experienced gym-goers can be valuable sources of good information.”

– Philip Fusco

HOT BODY RULES

According to Philip Fusco

Lose weight and gain stamina

The ideas behind all great workouts to lose weight involve elevating your heart rate to more than 120 beats per minute and KEEPING IT at this higher elevation throughout the workout. You want to SWEAT, SWEAT, SWEAT, feel that BURN, and always make sure you stay hydrated, keeping a bottle of water nearby. (A gym will suggest that you have a medical evaluation to make sure you know your limits).

Work out starting with a lighter weight, doing hard impact exercises with high repetitions. Slowly increase the weight over time while maintaining the high repetitions.

Workouts should only last between 60 and 80 minutes. Too much working out can actually have the opposite effect.

Why the hell have I got a kettlebell?

Kettlebells are the bees’ knees when it comes to toning and fat burning, according to Garard. “It has a good fat-burning effect because your heart rate’s up, and because of the fact that you’re using your whole body in all those movements, and your core has to be really strong throughout, with the right technique,” he says. Technique is the key word. Without proper instruction from a trainer who has undertaken specialised kettlebell training, these things can be dangerous – especially at the weights Garard recommends. “Kettlebells can be used in four-kilo increments, so a woman might be swinging 12 to 16 kilograms, but they can do that with a high volume of repetition so they might do 20 or 30 reps,” he says. Once you’ve got your technique right, Garard recommends integrating your kettles into your HIIT cardio: “Use them in eight 20-second intervals and see how many swings you can do in each round,” he says. Here’s betting you’ll be stuffed by round five or six.



BEFORE YOU START

Firm thighs are for life, not just for New Year's...

The strategy? Start with this fitness test and schedule monthly re-tests. "Having concrete results showing physical improvements each month is very motivating, and makes us feel proud of what we've accomplished," Govoni says. Your fit life starts now.

FIT-STRUCTIONS: For the following, have a buddy record how many of the specific exercises you can perform during the allotted time. You can take rests when needed, but a repetition only counts if it is completed with proper form.



UPPER BODY STRENGTH 1 MIN

How many push-ups? (This can be done on knees)

1. Come onto your hands and knees on the ground.
2. Take your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Keep your hands in line with your shoulders.
3. Shift your weight forward into your hands.
4. Have a friend place their fist on the ground under your chest.
5. Start the clock.
6. Bend your elbows and lower your chest to hit your friend's fist. That's one proper rep.

LOWER BODY STRENGTH 1 MIN

How many body weight squats?

1. Start with your feet about hip-width apart.
2. Keeping your chest up with a neutral spine, bring your hands behind your head so your elbows are out wide.
3. Start the clock.
4. Bend your knees to bring your thighs parallel to the floor, as you 'squat' down.
5. Engage your abs and push through your heels back to standing.
6. That's one proper rep.

CARDIOVASCULAR STRENGTH 1 MIN

How many burpees?

1. Stand tall with feet hip-width distance apart.
2. Start the clock.

3. Bend your knees and place your hands on the ground in front of your feet.
4. Jump your feet back behind you into plank position.
5. Jump your feet back to your hands.
6. Come up to standing and jump your feet off the ground.
7. That is one proper rep.

BALANCE 30 SECS EACH SIDE How many single-leg touchdowns?

1. Stand on right foot with a slight bend in your right knee.
2. Keep a neutral spine and lift your left arm up by your ear.
3. Start the clock.
4. Hinge forward to reach your left arm to your right foot as you extend your left leg out behind you.
5. Return to standing without putting your left foot back on the ground.
6. That's one proper rep.

CORE STRENGTH How long can you hold a forearm plank?

1. Begin on the floor on your hands and knees.
2. Lower onto your forearms and extend your feet back behind you.
3. Elbows should be directly under your shoulders.
4. Spine and neck are kept neutral and abdominals fully engaged.
5. Keep your feet and legs together and squeeze your glutes.
6. This is the proper plank form. Start the clock. Record how long you can hold this position with the proper form.

THE MOVES

NOW YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, ALL THAT'S LEFT TO DO IS, WELL, DO IT
(SEE P. 72 FOR RULES TO FIT YOUR GOAL)

KEY:  STRENGTH  CORE

#1 KETTLEBELL SQUAT



HOW TO: Stand up straight, holding a two to four kg kettlebell in front of your chest with both hands, keeping the elbows close to your body. Start the squat, keeping the weight on the heels of your feet, with your back straight, until your thighs are parallel to the ground or just below. Return to standing, and repeat for 15 to 20 reps (or more!). Just remember: quality over quantity!

TARGETS: Shoulders, back, arms, abs, glutes, legs



! This exercise can be messed up in technique by bending back and not keeping back straight. This exercise can also lead to injury if not done right, so remember, focus on doing it correctly and do not try to show off.

#2 SIDE PLANK TO TOUCH THE SKY



HOW TO: Get in plank position with your hands on a 30 to 45 cm stepboard. With all of your weight on your left arm, rotate your body while raising your right arm toward the sky. Return to plank position and step your right arm down to the right of the bench, then your left arm down to the left of the bench. Step back up, leading with your left arm. That is one rep.

TARGETS: Full core, abs, shoulders, chest, back, and hips

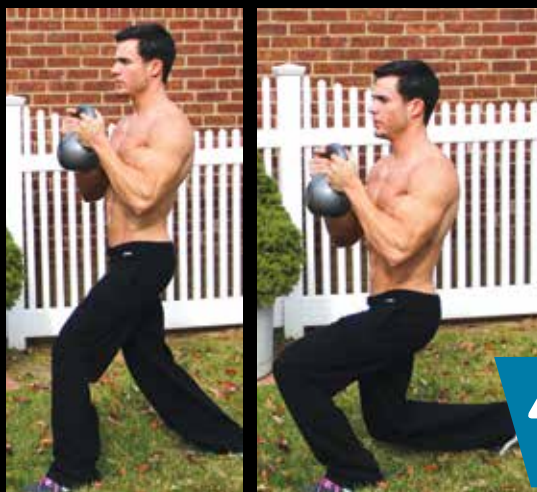


#3 KETTLEBELL LUNGE



HOW TO: Stand up straight while holding the kettlebell in front of your chest with two hands, arms bent and palms facing each other. Lunge forward with one leg while raising the kettlebell overhead. Return to standing while returning the kettlebell to the starting position in front of your chest. Try for 10 to 15 reps on each leg.

TIP: Always face forward and do not move your head



This exercise can easily be messed up in technique if not done correctly and can also lead to serious injury. Seek instruction!

#4 BICYCLE PLANK CRUNCH



HOW TO: Get in plank position with your hands shoulder-width apart on a yoga ball. Pull your right knee toward your chest. Hold for one second, then return to plank position; repeat with other leg.



#5 ARM PULL-OVER STRAIGHT-LEG CRUNCH



HOW TO: Grab a pair of four to five kg dumbbells and lie on your back with your arms stretched behind you. Raise your legs to a 45-degree angle. Bring your arms up over your chest and lift your shoulders off the mat while raising your legs until they're perpendicular to the floor. Return to starting position without letting your legs touch the floor. That's one rep.

TARGETS: Upper back, abs, and hips

ACTIVATE YOUR ENERGY

HEADACHE? SINUSES?
SNORING? SHALLOW BREATHING?
SLEEPING PROBLEMS? STRESS?
NECK PAIN? HEART RACING?
SMOKING? CHEST TIGHTNESS?
ASTHMA? BLOATEDNESS?
MUSCLE ACHES & STIFFNESS? ANXIETY?
TENSION? WEIGHT LOSS?

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THE RULES



RED = FAT LOSS, **BLUE** = STRENGTH,
PURPLE = STAMINA, **GREEN** = LEGS

Look for the colour code to match your goals and schedule workouts accordingly

● DAY 1 CORE

Include 30 minutes in the gym working on all core exercises (do the core exercises for half the time, and split a second 30 minutes between the stair stepper and elliptical)

● DAY 2 ARMS

TIP: The goal we are shooting for is lower weight and higher repetition. We need to feel the burn and feel each muscle working out, so try for that extra rep.

Warm-up with a 10-minute walk on treadmill before 30 minutes of weights

REMINDER: Make sure your diet is balanced with protein and complex carbs

BICEPS

1) Straight-arm curls

To do it: Grab a lightweight dumbbell (one per arm). Start with both arms fully extended with the dumbbell in your hands. Bring both arms up to about a 95-degree angle, hold for a second then go back down to arms fully extended – that was one rep. Do 10 to 15 reps with low weight and really feel the burn (it's super important to feel that. And also very important to make sure technique is correct).

2) Straight-arm curls on the universal machine

To do it: Go to the cable universal machine and do curls with the longer bar. Bring the bar up to a 95-degree angle then come down to where arms are fully extended to complete one rep. Do 15 reps.

TRICEPS

1) Tricep pull-down with V-bar

To do it: Still on the cable universal machine, grab a V-bar and attach it to a pulley overhead. Keep elbows attached to body like there is a piece of string holding them securely to your body. Bring the V-bar down until your arms are almost fully extended then hold it for a second and bring it back up. That was one rep. Do 15 reps.

2) One-arm tricep pull-down

To do it: Switch the V-bar to a one-handed piece and essentially do the same exercise but individually for each arm with the single piece. Do 15 push-ups (for two sets) and 10 pull-ups (for two sets) on the pull-up assisted machine.

●● DAY 3 STRETCHING & FLEXIBILITY OF BACK

Start the gym day with 35 minutes of mixed cardio (15 minutes of treadmill and 20 minutes of elliptical). Proceed to exercises: high reps and low weight.

1) In front of the head Lat Pulldowns

To do it: Start by positioning your body correctly on the bench with feet flat on the floor and knees bent at 90 degrees, in line with your hips. Your legs should just touch the padded bar above them so that when you lean slightly back, your quads hit. Once the bench is positioned, stand up and grab hold of the bar where it bends and sit back down. Lean a little bit back from your hips, bring the shoulder blades back and down and pull right to your chest and in a little then send the bar right back up. Do two sets of 20 reps.

2) Seated Rows

To do it: Attach a V-bar to a rowing machine and sit on the bench with your feet on the footrest and your knees slightly bent.

Grasp the V-bar so that your palms are facing forward.

Extend your arms as you lean backward, achieving a 90-degree angle between your waist and your legs. Slightly arch your back so that your chest protrudes. This is your starting position.

Without moving your torso, exhale as you pull the V-bar towards your body until it nearly touches your chest.

Contract your back muscles for a count and then inhale as you slowly return the V-bar back to starting position.

Repeat for a complete set.



● DAY 4

Hit the bike for 45 minutes, hit the elliptical machine for 15 minutes, then do 15 to 20 minutes of yoga or stretching.

●● DAY 5

Start the gym with a 10-minute treadmill walk as a warm-up. Then do exercise 1 (see p. 71). Do two sets of 15 reps with low weight. Then proceed to exercise 2 and do three sets of 10 to 20 reps. Remember, use a low weight and try to get the 20 reps. Aussie, Aussie, Aussie! ■

For more New Year fitness tips or to contact Phil, visit philcity.com. Follow Phil at facebook.com/PhilipFusco



Before you get stuck in... (remember that thing about investments and impulse buys?)

1 If you've been in the idle camp or are coming back from a period of inactivity or injury, Fusco recommends consulting a physician to make sure your body's up to the job.

2 Science says you can't outtrain a bad diet – it only takes two thirds of a Mars Bar to cancel a decent workout. Try Slim Secrets' new Crème Caramel mini bar, which tastes like something from your fave cake store with negligible carbs and about 100 calories.

3 Eat five small meals a day: brekkie, small healthy snack (see Slim Secrets bar), lunch, small healthy snack and dinner. If you need a sweet treat after dinner, try Jarrah white Chocolate, which tastes decadent but has just 255 kJ.