

How did you get on with your new year's fitness resolutions this year? If you're one of those rare people still keeping them up, congratulations. But if, as recent research shows, you're one of around 80 per cent of people who fail their resolutions – with the majority doing so by mid-February – don't beat yourself up. It's likely you just didn't have the right motivation. According to a new YouGov study, the most popular resolutions for Britons centre on enjoying better health, with exercising more (47 per cent), losing weight (44 per cent) and a better diet (41 per cent) topping the chart. But while these can seem like worthy goals, they're clearly not motivating us sufficiently, otherwise we'd all be at our goal weight and running marathons by now, right?



BUDDY UP!
 Never have time to see your friends? Combine socialising with exercise by swapping nights in watching boxsets for a yoga or dance class with your pals – research also shows you'll be more likely to stick to your workout plans if you have a buddy to train with.

1 BEAT LONELINESS

Motivation Digital technology is supposed to make us feel connected but it's actually sparking feelings of isolation and alienation, with recent figures suggesting up to nine million UK adults are suffering from loneliness. Thankfully, exercise can offer the perfect opportunity to meet people and become part of a meaningful community. When you join your local exercise group, running or cycling club or sports team, you also benefit from regular socials. And this increases your chances of making exercise more consistent in your life – research from Lucozade Sport shows that 71 per cent of women are more likely to stick to regular exercise if they're part of a group, as opposed to training on their own. Take Hayle Runners (haylerunners.com), for example, which is famed for being the friendliest running club in Cornwall, and provides a Sunday run hosted by a different member each week that finishes with cake and tea, attracting runners of all ages, including a hardcore group of 60- to 80-year-olds who attend specifically to interact with others. Despite gyms and fitness classes being a communal environment, they can often be a lonely place, so choose one where community is at the heart of everything. Gym chain F45 Training (f45training.com) places a massive emphasis on making friends, ending each session with high fives to break down barriers and hosting regular socials. Mini trampoline fitness class ((BOUNCE)) (bouncefitbody.com) prides itself on being inclusive and welcoming, with 86 per cent of attendees saying they go for the social aspect of exercise. Or try The Bitch Clinic (thebitchclinic.com), which hosts primal movement fitness classes followed by 'circle time', for women to swap stories and support each other. Another way to meet new people is a workout app such as Flöckbud (flockbud.com), which uses geolocation technology to connect people who love the same sports, or the Nexercise app (Apple app store), where exercise is a game and a chance to meet and compete with new-found friends.

Find your
**FITNESS
 MOJO!**

Not hitting your goals? Uncover your true workout passion and fall in love with your workouts all over again

Words: Joanna Ebsworth

DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE

Why do fitness goals so often fail? Do we need a new approach? 'Goals aren't necessarily a bad thing', says Tally Rye, PT and author of *Train Happy: An intuitive exercise plan for every body* (Pavilion, £14.99). 'But it's all about your intention. Often, we set unrealistic goals centred around weight loss and body transformation, rather than focusing on tangible goals such as feeling stronger to play with your kids.' Training to manipulate your body shape takes a lot of time, effort and dedication, says Rye. We can get disheartened and end up doing forms of exercise we don't enjoy because we're told they'll get the best results, rather than doing those we like. 'Sadly we're seeing exercise as a form of punishment,' says Rye. 'If you approach it wanting to have fun, make friends, feel happier or raise money for a charity you connect with, you'll be more motivated.' With this in mind, we've created a guide to help you find a new reason to exercise that works with your passions and your lifestyle. Get ready to fall in love with your workouts!

PHOTOGRAPHY: iStock



2 HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Motivation

Passionate about making the world a better place? There are plenty of ways to work on your body and mind while helping the planet at the same time. Take plogging, for instance. This fitness trend from Sweden is a mash-up of jogging and the Swedish phrase 'plocka upp' (pick up), with followers picking up litter while out running. Check out the UK's Plogolution (plogolution.com), which regularly arranges events or 'plogs'.

The online #trashtag movement – reportedly created in 2015 as part of a campaign to protect wilderness areas – is also enjoying a viral resurgence as people choose an area to clear up and show off before and after pictures. Why not get a group of friends together, grab some bin bags and protective gloves, and choose a running route, picking up trash as you go? And check the Green Gym network (tcv.org.uk), a community volunteering

charity which organises outdoor activities that benefit the environment, such as planting trees and building wildlife ponds.

Worried about the carbon footprint of your gym sessions? A recent report revealed the UK's sports and recreation buildings spend £700 million on energy each year, causing an annual 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. Try taking your workouts outside, or look out for an eco-friendly gym such as London's carbon-neutral boutique fitness and wellness studio, Rumble (rumble-gym.com), which plants a tree for every class or PT session booked to help offset its carbon footprint. Terra Hale's (terrahale.com) human-powered studio in London, harnesses members' energy to power its facilities – and the neighbours' facilities too, if you sweat hard enough!

RUN THE WORLD!

Would you like to run for your country? Join 300,000 people around the world in a digital running competition, The Vitality Running World Cup (runningworldcup.com). Sign up today!

Motivation

3 DO GOOD!

You might not have noticed it from the isolation of your treadmill, but these days, the motivation to move can run far deeper than simply achieving a personal best. The recent Movers List campaign from Lucozade Sport (lucozadesport.com/the-movers-list), recognises 50 UK individuals whose volunteering, charity work and dedication to sport has inspired local communities to move more. It highlights the emergence of different 'tribes' of movers, all using fitness to come together to support good causes. One such

initiative is the GoodGym (goodgym.org), which combines running with performing good deeds. Each run you do is classed as a mission. You might, for example, jog to an elderly person's home with a newspaper, change a light bulb or tidy their garden

– literally running errands for those who need it. You can also sign up to do manual labour for local community groups. Other groups include Primal Roots (primalroots.org.uk), a social enterprise that runs forest fitness classes, to help people in recovery and those who've experienced homelessness rebuild their lives through movement and kinship; and Bikestormz (bikestormz.org), which holds mass ride outs to promote the message of 'Bikes Up, Knives Down'.

Raising money for charity has motivated millions to train for a fitness event, but you don't have to enter a specific challenge to fundraise. Try downloading the Charity Miles app (charitymiles.org) for your training. It tracks your movements and donates money to your chosen charity (choose from a list) for every mile you walk, run or cycle. Or try out the Sweatcoin app, which pays you digital currency for walking and lets you donate your Sweatcoins to charity – another great way to help you up your step count.

4 BOOST YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Motivation

Exercise has long been known to help relieve depression, stress and anxiety. But pressuring yourself to work out can take a toll on your wellbeing. Doing too many high-intensity classes, for instance, can cause spikes in the stress hormone cortisol. Sometimes you need to move your workouts into the slow lane. If you're feeling tired or burnt out, it could be time to embrace one of the increasing number of holistic workouts that acknowledge the deep link between movement and emotional wellbeing. 'Recovery', 'restoration', and 'cortisol-conscious' classes are all set to be more than a passing trend. Boom Cycle's newly launched Mindful Ride concept, in collaboration with relaxation app CALM, is a 75-minute class that starts with a guided meditation, followed by a 50-minute ride that takes you through a kaleidoscope of sensory experiences, ending with time in the reflection zone (the next ride is on April 25; boomcycle.co.uk). Or check out immersive yoga studio FLY LDN (flyldn.co.uk), which shows footage of nature during its FlowLife classes, proven to directly impact on your mood and perceived wellbeing.

If digital life is threatening to overwhelm your physical, mental and emotional health, forest bathing – where exercise or relaxation in woods, taking in the sights, sounds and smells – could be the perfect antidote. Research shows exposure to green space reduces levels of salivary cortisol (a physiological marker of stress), and just 20 minutes in an urban park can raise subjective wellness by 64 per cent. GPs in Scotland are to start issuing Nature Prescriptions for patients with heart disease and chronic stress, while patients in Shetland will be prescribed birdwatching, rambling and beach walks, rather than drugs such as antidepressants.

According to research published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*, team sports are the most effective at reducing mental stress, so why not give your local football, netball or volleyball club a try? If you're a new mum, give a buggy class a go or try a



'IT WORKED FOR ME'



'Exercise has hugely benefited my mental health in recent years. Working up a sweat helps my anxiety by forcing my mind to focus on something

other than my thoughts, and the endorphin boost brings down my cortisol levels. I also feel a huge sense of community doing a variety of class-based workouts across London, making lots of like-minded friends. I work out in tune with my body, doing high-energy classes after a restful weekend, and switching to yoga or breathwork when I'm feeling exhausted towards the end of the week. I love FLEX Chelsea's weekly CBD Yin Yoga class – it's the ultimate in mind and body relaxation.'

Tori Porter, fitness & wellbeing PR expert

'If you're feeling burnt out, it could be time to try holistic workouts'

Mummy and Me yoga session, which often ends with social time to talk about the highs and lows of parenthood.

There's a reason they say 'laughter is the best medicine' so, if you've found the fun factor has gone out of your fitness regime, try relaxing your regular training timetable and swapping sessions for fun forms of exercise such as RockFit (rockfit.org.uk), a fitness class set to rock music using air-guitar moves, or Pets Yoga (petsyoga.com) that surrounds you with puppies, kittens and bunnies as you try to move from one asana to another – it's bound to make your endorphins soar!



'IT WORKED FOR ME'

'My fitness motivation transformed when I discovered GoodGym. They paired me with an elderly gent in his 80s who lives two miles from me. Now, I run to him twice a week, we have natter over a cup of tea and I help with jobs around the house, then I run home. Seeing the positive impact my visits have made on his wellbeing is incredibly rewarding. Getting fitter at the same time is a bonus.'

Ruth Bradshaw, trainee paramedic