

Fitness aSassin
Bend Living 2009 Winter Issue
The Great Holiday Hangover

Once again, you wake up in a fog on January 1, wondering who's body you're in, can't even remember all the treats you've been partying with because you lost track sometime in December, and have a lingering guilt about all the times you've been cheating on your trainer, running partner or spin instructor for a better date (dressed to kill in a seductive coating of sugar, fat and yes, even alcohol). These playmates sure looked good at the party, but now that the fog's lifted, what you're left with is your old 5-10 pounds of fat from last year, clinging to your derriere, hanging over your belt, layering your thighs, and hinting that they're here to stay.

Now what? You've got to do something, fast! All you need is a jumpstart and this year will be different! Oooh, it's tempting to go on a diet. You can just clean out your system, exercise like a maniac, and get rid of that fat for good this time, right? Unfortunately, your body won't be listening. It remembers last year's New Year's Resolution (and the year before that, and the year before that). As a matter of fact, your body remembers everything you've done to it, for it, with it and because of it.

The human body is a fat-storing machine, and a very efficient one with no extra help from you. Every time you do something extreme, it may give you the momentary quick fix you're looking for, but will backfire on you in the long run. The question this year is: Would you? Could you? Will you be able to develop a nice long sustainable relationship with your body? One where you don't have to worry that it's going to pack on five pounds every time you have a little fun?

Whatever your fitness level, here are some things you can do to give your body what it deserves, and trust it to do the same for you:

Apprentice:

- Be realistic. It's OK to dive in when you're high on motivation, but don't drop everything in life to diet and exercise if you don't see yourself still at it three months from now. Start with adding or changing one thing a month and stick with it.
- Accept the facts: this is your body and if it hasn't ever magically changed overnight, it won't be starting now. The good news is that any level of commitment to exercising and cleaning up your food will make a difference.
- When you do commit to exercise as a part of life, do something you enjoy for Pete's sake. If playing with your kid's Wii or jumping on your bed when no one's looking makes you happy, go for it.

Enthusiast:

- Get rid of all the leftover junk; clean out the fridge and cabinets now, not next Monday (eating everything to make it disappear doesn't count).
- Set a goal. The goals that last normally have to do with something bigger than yourself. Find a local charity event, fun run, or competitive race that you can work for, mark it in your calendar, and pay the entry fee. As soon as that one's done, look for another one!
- Establish your health and fitness as a bigger priority than it is right now. If it takes a back seat to the kids, the job and the bank account, remember that when you eat healthfully and get your exercise in, you will be leading by example for the little ones, be a much happier boss or employee, and will definitely be adding extra years onto your life to enjoy your net worth.

Addict:

- Get the numbers right. Have your body composition measured, a lactate test done, keep a food and exercise journal, and measure your progress monthly.
- Get into one of the many elite training programs in town that can keep you in peak shape year round.
- Don't punish yourself. Well, go ahead if you have to, but just not with your food and exercise. Adequate recuperation is your key to success.