



FRESH starts

We don't know about you, but we're tired of the typical "lose weight," "go to the gym," "start a diet" New Year's resolutions that just never seem to stick. So for 2023, we're trying something different. These 12 intentions go beyond diet and exercise and are super easy to adopt. Try one, two or all of them!

TEXT MARIANNE DAVIDSON

ILLUSTRATION, ISTOCKPHOTO/E

1

DO A BODY-CARE BLITZ

Set aside an hour per week to treat your skin from head to toe. This is the time to take a long shower or bath. Exfoliate your skin, apply face and hair masks, lather up and rinse down and enjoy a long soak. Don't forget about aromatherapy, whether it's essential oils dropped in the bath water or a scented shower cake placed at the drain—this will enhance your experience tenfold. When you're done in the water, apply a cooling collagen sheet mask to your face (one you don't need to wash off), then take your time massaging body oil or cream into your skin while your face mask works its magic. Follow that by donning comfy clothes and finishing up your skin-care routine.

2

STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Studies show that there's a direct correlation between the strength of one's relationships and life satisfaction, happiness and overall health. *The Good Life: Lessons From the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness* (Simon & Schuster) by Robert Waldinger, MD, and Marc Schulz, PhD, is the book to read that'll tell you all about it as well as teach you how to create a more meaningful, contented life.

3

GET ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Got something in your life you really want to try but just can't muster up the motivation? An app may be helpful for you to attain your goals. The options for apps that aid in tallying up your progress are truly endless. Whether you want to track your sleep, menstrual cycle, water intake, steps or exercise, or even if you want to learn a new language or get a roundup of weekly deals for your grocery list, there's an app for that.

4

SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

Looking for a nutritious and delicious way to boost your health this year? Try adding some new herbs and spices to your culinary repertoire. From strong and spicy to subtle and sweet, herbs and spices add flavour without the need for added salt or sugar. What's more? Some research shows that herbs and spices contain plant compounds with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties that may boost the immune system and help protect against chronic illnesses.

5

GIVE UP ONE INDULGENCE

Small changes are much easier to commit to than huge ones, and they still add up to big results. Try giving up one of your biggest indulgences once a week (say, skipping your takeout coffee on Fridays, or forgoing your after-dinner dessert on Mondays). Over time, this can add up to significantly more money in your pocket or less sugar in your diet, all without having to say goodbye to your favourite pleasures permanently.

6

PIGGYBACK ON YOUR EXISTING ROUTINE

Sometimes it's hard to adopt a new habit. But it's infinitely easier if you add the task to what you're already doing. Want to take your vitamins but always forget? Place them beside your coffee maker or toaster, or even next to your toothbrush. Want to drink more water? Place a bottle on your nightstand and drink it first thing in the morning before you look at your phone.

7

TAKE A TECH BREAK

Whether it's ditching the headphones on your walk to listen to the sounds of nature, minimizing screen time by 20 minutes a day, or forgoing your last 30 minutes of TV watching in the evening to read a book, your eyes and ears will thank you.

8

WOKE UP

It's easy to let the days go by without knowing what's going on in the world, which we all know can be a scary place at times. But being an informed citizen is powerful, and it helps us be socially responsible. Consider signing up for a daily email newsletter that compiles all of the important stories in one place, or tuning into a weekly podcast that rounds up the latest need-to-know info so you're always up to date.

9

SAY "PEACE OUT" TO PLASTIC

It's true that Canadians use way too much plastic, with most of it ending up in landfills. Try cutting down your plastic consumption by opting for cosmetics in aluminum or glass packaging, bringing your own reusable totes to the grocery store or packing your lunch in reusable containers or beeswax wrap. Doing away with plastic might be easier than you think, and the Earth we all love will benefit.

10

KEEP YOUR NECK IN CHECK

Neck pain can dog us as we age, but regular stretching can help to loosen tension, maintain mobility and reduce pain. Here's an easy exercise you can do just about anywhere, anytime: Sit or stand up straight and relax your shoulders. Slowly turn your head to the right until you feel a gentle stretch. Take three deep breaths and return to face forward; repeat on the left side. Do up to 10 sets at a time. Bonus: This stretch doubles as a mini meditation! Make this practice part of your daily routine for a few moments of relaxation.

11

BOOST YOUR BRAIN

If you've been experiencing brain fog, can't remember things as well as you used to or you just want to feel mentally sharper, give Dr. Sanjay Gupta's new book, *12 Weeks to a Sharper You: A Practical Guide—Build a Better Brain At Any Age* (Simon & Schuster), a read. It's full of tips, quotations and prompts that guide you to keep your brain young and healthy, no matter how old you are.

12

MODIFY YOUR MORNINGS

Let's face it—mornings can be the most hectic time of the day, but they don't have to get you down before you even start! Try to make mornings easier by transferring one regular task to the evening before. It can be as simple as taking your lunchbox out of the cupboard and placing the nonperishable items on the counter or even preprogramming your coffee maker. Start by making a list of your morning jobs and see which ones you can check off in advance.