

Let's talk – goals

The key things to take away with you



Meet Our Experts: **Goal Setting Event**

Goal setting: sticking to it

Question. How many times have you set yourself a goal, only to give up just a few weeks later? Don't worry, you're not alone... but hopefully we've got some advice and tips to help you stay on track this time!



◆ Start small

Some goals can seem like giant, insurmountable obstacles. Losing a lot of weight, for example, can feel impossible. But breaking down a big task into smaller chunks means you can slowly but surely chip away.

Set yourself short (1-4 weeks), medium (3-6 months) and long-term (12+ months) goals. Every time you hit a small target, you'll feel motivated, giving you an additional push towards achieving success.

◆ Reward yourself

Hey, if you're putting in the hard work, you deserve a treat every now and then! Rewards provide an additional layer of positivity, encouraging you to succeed.

◆ Tell your friends and family

Making friends and family aware of what you're trying to achieve can help prevent any unintentionally negative peer pressure, to 'skip the workout' or 'treat yourself'. If they know what you're striving for, they're more likely to rally around and help you to reach your goal.

◆ Be consistent

This really will help you to achieve your goals and maintain good health in the long-term – whether it's your approach to exercise, nutrition, sleep, stress or emotional wellbeing.

◆ Don't beat yourself up

If you fall off the wagon, don't be too hard on yourself – just jump straight back on!

“Breaking down a big task into smaller chunks means you can slowly but surely chip away”



Why exercise is actually good for your joints

“I don’t do that exercise because it’s bad for your joints.” Sound familiar? It’s a common reason people avoid certain exercises or classes. But this assumption that exercise damages your joints is actually false. Studies have shown that exercise does benefit your joints, keeping them stronger for longer.

◆ Building strong cartilage in your joints

Arthritis happens when the cartilage that cushions your joints wears away, leaving bone rubbing on bone, which causes pain and discomfort. This isn’t the result of exercise, but of injury and constant low-level damage over time. Research has shown that exercise can actually reinforce cartilage. Of course, if you already suffer from joint pain, high-impact exercises that aggravate it should be avoided – but there are still plenty of exercises that you can do to build strength in your joints.

◆ Muscles and ligaments – your joints’ support network

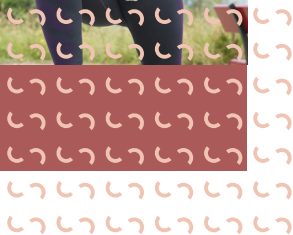
Your knees, hips and other joints rely on a supportive network of muscles and ligaments to keep them sturdy. So, exercises that build these muscles and strengthen the ligaments will strengthen your joints, making you less prone to injury in the long run.

◆ Physical and mental

Building strength in your joints can help improve your posture and prevent a whole load of injuries as a result. And the more you move, the less stiff and fatigued you'll feel. Exercise can affect your mental outlook too, flooding your brain's receptors with 'feel good' endorphins, which both make you feel happier and change your perception of pain. In fact, you might find that any pain becomes more manageable after exercise and you're more motivated to do more than you ever thought possible!

Supporting our local communities Joint Pain Programme

Our 12-week Joint Pain Programme is designed to help those living with joint pain live life to the fullest. You'll take part in two sessions every week with a wellbeing expert, learning about the role of food, exercise, sleep and mental wellbeing when it comes to managing pain.



Exercise classes at our gyms

We want to help you reach your goals – whatever they might be. So, we take pride in offering an exciting and varied class timetable. Whether you're training for a marathon, looking for a weekly yoga class to help you unwind, or want to work up a sweat with a group cycle class, we offer a workout to meet the needs of all ages and abilities.



◆ How bringing a buddy can really help

Bringing a gym buddy along with you to classes can help you keep on track with your health and fitness goals. Classes provide a routine and workout structure that can be difficult to maintain on your own but working out with strangers is very different from working out with someone you already know. Bringing a friend to classes means you'll have all the benefits of a class, plus the additional support of a friend. Here are five more reasons why having a dedicated gym buddy can help you get even more out of your classes at the gym:

1. Motivation

We all have days when we want to switch off the alarm clock and roll over, but the peer pressure of not wanting to let your buddy down can encourage you to get up and go. Plus, once in the class, seeing your friend work hard will make you work harder too.

2. Moral support

For some, classes can feel intimidating, especially if you've not attended them before. Taking someone you know can help ease you into the class and build your confidence.

3. Your own spotter

While the instructor will always keep an eye on the form of participants, it can help to have an extra set of eyes to keep watch. Taking a partner to classes means you can look out for each other to ensure you're performing the exercises to the best of your abilities and getting the most from your workout.

4. Combining skills

We all have different strengths, but we're stronger together. If coordination isn't your forte, so what?! Your friend will be there to pick up the slack and everything will feel less embarrassing with your friend there to back you up.

5. Training teamwork

If you and a friend have entered the same sporting event, joining a fitness class together can be a useful inclusion in your training because classes offer structured workouts to target your specific goals. Doing classes together means you'll be able to keep track of each other's progress and ensure neither is falling behind.



Breaking unhealthy habits

Habits are settled practices and tendencies that by their very nature are difficult to give up – and very often willpower alone is not enough! But the good news is, there are ways to boost your chances of breaking those unhealthy habits for good.



◆ Shape your environment

Remove temptation, try to identify and get over barriers to eating healthily, being active or getting a good night's sleep. A few examples:

- Don't keep treats at home where you can access them anytime you have a craving
- Make sure you have the right clothing and kit for exercise and keep it washed and ready in a place you won't forget
- Create prompts to break long periods of sitting – e.g. make TV adverts your time to move or routinely get off the bus or train a stop early
- If you drive, try to find parking space that's a 10-minute walk away from the office
- Leave your phone in another room when you go to bed so you won't be tempted to look at it when you should be winding down
- Write up a shopping list and plan your route around the supermarket to avoid aisles where the products appeal to your weaknesses
- Don't wait until you're hungry to buy food: and if you're out, pack something healthy to take with you
- Use reminders on your phone, work computer or a fitness tracker to prompt you to get out of your seat and move around.



◆ One step at a time

If you tend to eat unhealthily or avoid physical activity, there are many things you can do to improve your lifestyle. Setting out to achieve radical change is great, but unlikely to be successful. Instead, choose one change and try to stick with just that for a while. For example, promise yourself you won't buy that packet of sweets on the way home every day or commit yourself to a short daily walk.

“Don't wait until you're hungry to buy food: and if you're out, pack something healthy to take with you”



Building a healthier nation, starting with you

We're the UK's largest healthcare charity. For the last 60 years, our team of experts have been working together to make the UK fitter, healthier, happier and stronger, all for the public benefit. As a trading charity with no shareholders, we invest all our income back into our family of 31 award-winning hospitals, 113 fitness and wellbeing centres, healthcare clinics and over 200 on-site workplace wellbeing services, as well as developing flagship charitable activities supporting our communities – all to realise our vision to build a healthier nation.

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*2019 annual report.

