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Get out of that rut!

Here are 16 ways to keep your resolutions revvin' in 2007

by Lisa Marie Metzler

How's that New Year's resolution to get fit coming along? Starting to dwindle a bit? Don't give up just yet! Chances are you're just bored or not seeing the results you hoped for. "The body is a smart adaptive mechanism and gets used to a routine of similar exercise movements and cardiovascular challenge in a short period of time," says Jim Hart, master personal trainer at the 12th Street Gym in Center City, Philadelphia. Try these tips to shake boredom and plateaus and you're sure to meet your goals.

1. "Hire a trainer," says Sara Dimmick, New York City certified personal trainer. "They can always give you variations on exercises you are doing or give you new ones to add to your program."
2. Change the variables of exercise. "Weight, frequency, rep speed, exercise selection, speed of movement, rest periods and intensity levels can keep you from getting stuck," says Hart.
3. Sign up for an area 5k, duathlon, mini triathlon or canoe race. For races in Michigan just Google your event. For example, typing in "Michigan canoe races" will turn up a variety of events and locations to choose from.
4. "Do it in another location. Visit another gym, yoga studio, class or take your run outside or run a new route," says Dimick.
5. Work out at a different time of day.
6. "Try a new discipline like martial arts, Tai Chi, Yoga Pilates or kickboxing," recommends Hart.
7. Get your groove on with a new dance DVD. Even if you have two left feet Dance Off the Inches: Tummy Tone Party Zone, Crunch Cardio Dance Blast or Dance Off the Inches: Sizzling Salsa are fun ways to add some variety to your routine.
8. Get your kids or friends together for a team sport once a week.
9. Start working out with a partner, or lose the partner!
10. "Completely change your cardio workouts every week," suggests Michael Sokol, personal trainer and founder of One-On-One Fitness Personal Training Service, Inc. "Run outside (or treadmill) for the first week, jump rope the second week, run the stairs in your house the third week, etc." Women have to be especially careful because they adapt to cardio workouts quicker than men do.
11. "Do your workout backwards," says Dimmick. "You will really find that you might be able to lift more weight at the beginning of the workout where maybe you used to only barely get through a few exercises and the cardio will feel much harder since you will be more tired."
12. Shuffle out of a slump. Joan Pagano's popular book Strength Training for Women is available as a deck of 52 cards. Each card has a different exercise and numbers of reps. Exercises are 5 minutes or less and include beginners to advanced levels.
13. Change your strength training routines every 4 weeks, recommends Sokol. Change the amount of weight used (e.g. 3 lbs. to 5 lbs.), the exercise used for that body part (e.g., change from dumbbell bicep curl to dumbbell bicep hammer curl) and the amount of repetitions (e.g., 15 reps to 12 reps at higher weight).
14. "Take 3 days off to allow your body to rest and heal completely then start fresh," says Hart.
15. Purchase some new gear for workouts at home. A Stability ball, medicine ball, punching bag, resistance bands, etc. can all add fun variety while working muscles in a different way.
16. Look fit and fabulous. Invest in some new shoes and trendy workout clothes.

Lisa Marie Metzler is a health and fitness writer who recently started punching a heavy bag for some variety and stress release!