

BARGAIN!

Aw....

Fur-ever friends

67p

CUDDLING MR FOX!

WIN!

A-PRO KARAOKE SYSTEM!

Real people

BURSTING WITH REAL LIFE!

No.52

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SMILES from the WOMB

But only for Sis!

PARTY ANIMAL

SPAT MY CHEEK ON TO THE FLOOR!

SHOCKING!



Eat my shorts bullies!

ME THEN

ME NOW!



I RAN AWAY WITH A CLOWN

(Well, he has VERY big feet!)



DON'T DITCH DR BOTOX

...OR ELSE!



STABBED & SHOT



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THE REAL STORY

We begin with the best intentions, but the depressing truth is that by the second week of the new year, many of us will reach for the biscuit tin, puff on a fag and drive merrily past the gym.

Year after year, polls show that most people struggle to keep their New Year's resolutions, and two-thirds are so sick of failure that they don't even bother making them any more.

For those still living in hope, favourite resolutions are to do with health – the top goal being to lose weight. But a survey last year for health company Bupa found that 43 per cent of us don't last a month before going back to our bad habits.

According to the International Health, Racquet & Sports Club Association, although 12 per cent of new gym memberships start in January, a big chunk of their profits come from individuals who attend irregularly, or sometimes not at all.

So why do we find sticking to our resolutions so hard?

Psychologist Denise Taylor believes it's because we fail to plan properly. 'Rather than thinking, "I'm going to do this," when we're in a hungover state on New Year's Day, we should plan in advance what we want to do and how we're going to go about it,' she says.

Real People's Gillian Crawley discovers how to stick at your goals... >>>>

HAPPY NEW ME!

ACT NOW!

Denise Taylor is a psychologist and career coach who knows all about New Year's resolutions. Seven years ago, she lost over 10st – and has successfully kept it off! She tells us how to make your resolutions stick...

Dressed in my summer garb, I felt as fresh as a daisy. 'I don't look that bad,' I told myself, ignoring the fact that, with my dimpled thunder thighs spilling out of my stretchy cycling shorts, I was clearly no Lycra-lover.

Did I give a toss? Did I, heck! My weight had been creeping up since I'd turned 30, and over the years, I'd eaten my way from 14st to 22st. But it was as though I had

the opposite of anorexia – despite what my reflection or my scales told me, I was firmly in denial.

Then, one day, seven years ago, it felt like I suddenly opened my eyes. Appraising my rolls of flab, I realised, with horror, that if I didn't do something about my weight, I was going to die fat.

That October, I joined the gym. Puffing away on the treadmill's lowest setting, I spotted a poster encouraging people to sign up to start getting fit in the new year.

'That's crazy!' I thought. 'I could easily be half a stone heavier by then!'

And I still think the best approach is to start right away, whatever your goal may be.

People are often motivated



Going to the gym helped me to get back my waist

to make resolutions for others – they don't want to be the fat mum who embarrasses her kids, or they're giving up smoking because their hubby is worried about their health, but if you don't really want to change, then you won't succeed.

You have to be realistic. I have clients who want to turn themselves into a completely

NEW YEAR CHALLENGES

This lot spent a year testing themselves in unusual ways...

Binning bad habits

In a bid to help the environment, the Strauss family from Gloucestershire managed to fill just one bin of rubbish in a year. By reusing and recycling almost all of their household waste, they were left with only a few crisp packets, broken toys and used felt-tip pens. They were hailed as 'inspirations' by their local butcher's, who said they'd encouraged other customers to follow suit.

Bonk ban

Writer Hephzibah Anderson decided to say no to nookie after a decade of dating disasters, turning her experiences into a book, *Chastened*. 'Certainly I missed sex, but as the year wore on, that actually got easier,' she said. 'The six-month mark was a bit testing, but



The Strausses kept their rubbish to just one bin

Top Resolutions

- 1 Lose weight
- 2 Get fit
- 3 Eat healthily
- 4 Take more care of my appearance
- 5 Get organised
- 6 See more of friends and family
- 7 More 'me' time
- 8 Drink less
- 9 Quit smoking
- 10 Learn a new skill

Real People 10

Ditch the doughnuts and you'll lose weight



different person. That's probably not going to happen, so I say, 'What are we going to focus on first?' Weight loss is a good example. If you lose weight, then you may be more confident, so you might get out more and so meet a new man. If you take one goal at a time, often other things will follow. Also, there's no need to go cold turkey. Being really strict works for some people, but sometimes it's better to set yourself little goals - cut out chocolate, go from 20 cigarettes a day to just 10, allow yourself a couple of glasses of wine occasionally. It will take longer to get to your ultimate goal, but you've got more chance of getting there in the end. ■

towards the end, that had become almost manageable because there were so many compensations.'

Walking on the wild side

Feeling disillusioned and burnt out by her job, Claire Dunn decided to ditch her comfortable life to spend a year living 'off grid' in the Australian outback, building a shelter from saplings and teaching herself wilderness survival skills.



Life's such fun with Simon and Tulip

THE 'YES' WOMAN

Lucy Willgress, 40, from Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, decided last New Year's Eve to say 'yes' to anything...

Sitting in my car late at night in the middle of nowhere, my New Year's resolution suddenly didn't seem like such a good idea.

I'd decided to get out of a rut by saying 'yes' to anything - within reason, of course.

I was inspired by the film *Yes Man*, which I'd watched just before Christmas with my husband, Simon, 33. Jim Carrey gets into hilarious situations by accepting challenges to try to make his boring life more exciting.

My first challenge came in the first week of January when a car loan demand for £1,000 plopped on the doormat. As a stay-at-home mum to my three-year-old daughter, Tulip, I had no way of paying it off.

'What shall I do?' I groaned to a friend.

'The pizza takeaway is looking for delivery drivers,' she said.

I got the job, donned a hideous uniform and started straight away. My first delivery seemed easy enough, but en route, I got hopelessly lost and called the

customer for directions.

As I handed over the stone-cold Hawaiian, I offered to go back and get another one. 'Forget it. I'm starving,' he yelled, slamming the door in my face.

Thankfully, I soon got better at navigation and became adept at dealing with tricky customers.

My next challenge was to become a published author - my mum, Evie, 73, challenged me to write a book, and in nine months, I finished my mystery novel. Now I just need to find a publisher with my



I love my Mustang convertible



Jim Carrey in *Yes Man* inspired me

NEW YEAR, NEW START!

kind of attitude, who's willing to say 'yes' to it!

Then, I swapped my modest Fiat 500 for a convertible red Mustang, because life's too short to go for the safe option. And I'm taking my dad, John, 78, on a booze cruise to Calais. I've never driven abroad and am a bit

nervous, but I'm going to make myself do it.

Before, I suffered anxiety and was often stuck in my house too afraid to try anything. But I forced myself, and the more I did, the easier it became. ■

LUCY'S TIPS:

- 1 Be positive. One of my challenges was to set up a Facebook site on cosmic ordering. Now I've got lots of members and might make a job of it.
- 2 Don't fear failure. I pushed myself into going out with a group of mums. It was a disaster. The old me would've blamed myself. The new me thought, 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained.'
- 3 Once you've achieved your goal, move on. I paid my debt, so I don't deliver pizzas any more. I have new challenges.

Make it Work!

- 1 Start at any time of year - you don't have to wait till New Year's Day.
- 2 You must want to do it.
- 3 Write it down - this makes it easy to know when you've actually reached your target.
- 4 Visualise yourself succeeding. Put images of what you want to achieve on a board to inspire you.
- 5 Work out whether a strict or relaxed approach will suit you.
- 6 If you slip up, don't give up. Just start again.
- 7 Don't take on too much - one resolution at a time is enough.
- 8 Be flexible - you can drop the diet for a day or take a rest from job-hunting.
- 9 Have a role model to inspire you.
- 10 Plan your reward for when you succeed.

Spend thrift

Most people want to give their wallets a rest after festive spending splurges, but Michelle McGagh went a step further, giving up meals out, cinema trips, holidays, rounds at the pub, new clothes and even train and bus fares, instead relying on her bicycle to get her from A to B. While she admitted missing facial moisturiser and takeaway curry, she was able to pay off a sizeable chunk of her mortgage in her year of not spending.



Michelle used her bike to get around

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