It’s January – New Year, new you?



Many people embark on a fitness journey of some kind in January. It’s the start of a new year, and in this case a new decade, so people feel inspired by an opportunity to start fresh. Wonderful! People feeling inspired to create a healthy and strong body is something I wholeheartedly endorse. The problems arise when people try to copy or conform to others’ plans or ideas to get fit.

The most important element you can put into your fitness journey is uniqueness. How is this journey going to benefit YOU and help YOU stick with it in the long term? Firstly, know what you enjoy that gets you moving. If you have no idea, sign up for a few different classes or activities (the great thing with it being January is that a lot of these have starter/trial offers!). Once you have found something you enjoy, you’ll WANT to get up and do it; you’ll look forward to it.

So, you’ve been ploughing full steam ahead on your new fitness regime and the first few days were great. Now you suddenly start feeling tired and achy and WORSE than you did before you started – what is going on?! I have 4 letters for you: DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness). When changing your fitness routine in any way, be it increased weights, more repetitions of something, or especially introducing new movements entirely, your muscles need some time to adjust. In the beginning they are being worked harder or differently to usual and so will need to adapt and grow. This leads to soreness within the worked muscles that passes over time as you get used to the movement. DOMS can be reduced with some easy habits: stretching after exercise/cooling down, foam rolling, hot Epsom salt baths, and massage. However notice my use of words, reduced not prevented!

Another very important thing to include in your fitness journey is rest days. The temptation to go hell for leather and exercise daily is high when you’ve got all of this inspiration and enthusiasm. Trust me though, if you want longevity you need to let your body rest. Rest is essential for recovery and helps to prevent injury. Alongside this, good nutrition will help to fuel your body to continue the journey. Not to mention if you’re working out more regularly, you’ll probably be hungrier! Listen to your body and fuel it with the energy that it needs.

One final thing - don’t be disheartened if things are hard at the beginning; you’re a beginner! Don’t compare yourself to others that are already well into their fitness journey or on a completely different one to you. It doesn’t matter what others think, this is your journey and it only matters what you think and how you feel day to day. Maybe some days are really tough and you feel really sore, other days you’ll feel amazing and on top of the world. Take each day as it comes and if you need more rest days some weeks, take them. If you need a massage, book one. After all it’s a journey; there isn’t really an end destination.