

The 30-step route to better physical and mental health

Our Fit Factor columnist **DAVID FAIRLAMB** on the changes you can make this year – starting now

2022 is surely the most important year ever to look after your health. It's time to respect your body and do as much as possible to help yourself and keep yourself strong.

Here are 30 tips to help you lose weight, re-energise and bring back that much needed self-confidence.

- 1. Ditch 'white death' - in other words cut back on as much sugar as possible, especially sugar-rich fizzy drinks.
- 2. You can't out-train a bad diet - 80% of losing weight is down to eating the correct food.
- 3. Train smart, seek advice from a professional and make sure you are eating and exercising correctly, targeting what you want to achieve.
- 4. Cut processed food from your shopping list; if it's not in the house you won't be tempted.
- 5. Drink two to three litres of water per day. As well as keeping you hydrated, it will help stave off hunger and keep you fuller for longer.
- 6. Avoid shopping when you are hungry as this can lead to you buying unnecessary items such as quick-fix processed food.
- 7. 75% of diet and exercise regimes fail within the first three weeks, so it's important to set yourself a target. Always have short and long term goals.
- 8. Snacking during the day may have become a habit. Eating more protein based main meals should help as would will stay fuller for longer.
- 9. Exercise more - join a class or a group and do something different. Research proves it boosts self confidence and aids mental health.
- 10. If you are looking to lose weight and feel fresh, cutting down on alcohol is a good place to start.
- 11. Boost your metabolism by adding different spices to your food.
- 12. Exercise in short quick bursts. Make interval training a priority to help you become fitter and stronger and get those feel-good endorphins flowing.



> David Fairlamb outside his North Shields gym

Fit Factor Extra

and therefore lead to weight gain.

- 21. Eating lean and clean food means you don't need to worry about portion sizes
 - 22. Berries such as blueberries, blackberries, strawberries and raspberries are the best type of fruit to consume and the lowest in natural sugar
 - 23. Mix your training up; your body will get used to the same workout and tempo very quickly. Change the resistance, speed, weight and order of training on a regular basis
 - 24. Not sure where to start with exercise? Take yourself out for a walk, and over time increase your distance and speed. See if you can add a jog, then run. As your fitness builds look to vary the type of exercise.
 - 25. Motivate yourself - use technology to monitor your steps per day and the calories you've burnt and look to improve weekly.
 - 26. Kick your metabolism into action every morning by eating breakfast. Lose the sugary sweet cereals, though...look towards eggs.
 - 27. The best meal is lean meat or fish with a load of green vegetables. Plain fresh food is your path to leanness.
 - 28. A hundred sit-ups a day will help strengthen your core but will not get you a six pack unless you are eating correctly; this is the only way to strip your body fat down.
 - 29. Ditch any thoughts of thinking fad diets work long-term. They will often mislead you, cost you the earth and lead to disappointment. If you want it badly enough you just need to make a few consistent changes to your daily life. If you stay strong mentally you will succeed.
 - 30. Why not donate all your chocolate, sweets and Christmas cake leftovers? This way any temptation at the start of the year has gone.
- Those who feel they have a long way to go on their health and weight-loss journey should think again. Clean, lean food combined with the right exercise works. You could be transformed in a matter of weeks.

Whoever is PM, keep your pledge over devolution

Jamie Driscoll 

OVER Christmas, a journalist asked me what would be the big political issue for 2022.

Let's separate out the political theatre. Boris Johnson is on the ropes. Will Liz Truss or Rishi Sunak replace him? Who will wield the knife? Yada, yada.

It might seem surprising, but I don't really care who is Prime Minister. Not as an end in itself, anyway. I'm far more interested in what Governments actually do.

Over two years ago the Conservative election manifesto promised to "level up" every part of the UK (page 26). What does that mean?

Page 29 said: "This is an agenda which shows that the days of Whitehall knows best are over. We will give towns, cities and communities of all sizes across the UK real power and real investment to drive the growth and the future and unleash their full potential."

And: "We will publish an English Devolution White Paper setting out our plans next year," i.e. 2020. It's now 2022, and still no White Paper on English Devolution.

There may be a "Levelling Up" White Paper out this month. There's certainly a lot of talk about it. Whether it delivers what's promised is a different matter.

The same manifesto promised: "We will build Northern Powerhouse Rail" (p27). That promise was broken in the recent (Dis) Integrated Rail Plan.

Mind you, in September they broke their headline promise that "We will not raise the rate of income tax, VAT or National Insurance" (p2), with the National Insurance increases.

There has been a pandemic. I'll understate the obvious and say that has been a serious distraction. But it's not a 'get out of jail free' pass for the Government.

I'd only been mayor for ten months, and still building a brand new Combined Authority team, when lockdown happened.

It hasn't stopped us from smashing our targets. Creating thousands of jobs.

Training tens of thousands of people in new skills. Implementing our Green New Deal.

It hasn't stopped me

delivering over half of my manifesto, despite being only half way through my term of office.

So for me, this year's big issue is: will we in the North East get the level of independence we need to secure our own future?

I will agree with the Tory manifesto on one thing - if we leave decision making in Whitehall, the North East will continue to miss out.

I've been working behind the scenes, and advocating publicly, for wider North East devolution since I was elected in May 2019. We need to speak with one voice.

Decision making has to reside at the right level. To quote Plato: "We must carve nature at the joints."

International law and war crimes should reside with the UN and International Criminal Court.

Foreign policy should be the responsibility of national Government.

Income and corporation tax should also be national, to prevent a race to the bottom. Economic development, though, works best at the functional economic area.

In most places, that's the conurbation and its rural hinterland. Buses, metros, trams and local rail work best at the city region level, simply because 80% of all journeys occur on that geography.

I've heard rumours that the latest draft of the White Paper proposes the creation of a statutory levelling-up quango.

That's precisely what we don't need - another layer of government in Westminster to oversee the de-layering of government.

What we do need is the devolved power to make our own decisions in the North.

Devolution means good jobs - proper, career-level jobs. Paying higher-than-average wages. Eliminating unemployment. Affordable housing. Improving our already-thriving cultural scene. Decarbonising our economy and restoring biodiversity. Faster and more reliable public transport. Creating a region - economic and cultural - that means our young people want to stay and make their lives here.

And significant financial independence, meaning that money generated in the region stays in the region.