

# NEW YEAR NEW YOU

FIVE SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR  
FITNESS RESOLUTIONS

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It's the one resolution everybody makes and everybody breaks. After a holiday season full of calorie-laden cheer, January 1 seems like the perfect time to tell those sugar plum fairies to take a hike. Add in the siren song of discounted gym memberships, and somehow losing weight and getting in shape becomes the number one New Year's resolution year after year.

BUT SWEATING OUT THE SWEETS takes more than discounts and resolutions. The typical shelf life of commitments made for the new year is just under a month, and it's easy to see why. Schedules filled to the brim with meetings, projects, appointments and plans. To-do lists take over and before you know it, spending time on a treadmill becomes as attractive as those stale fruitcakes hiding in the fridge.

Luckily, a few fitness trends have cropped up that will help tame those resolution relapses. Each promises to deliver an effective and fun full-body workout to help beat the post-holiday blahs. And, they pack a punch in less time than it takes to take down the decorations.

So say goodbye to another year of wishing, wanting and waiting to get in shape. These five fitness trends are sure to keep you on track till the ball drops next year.

#### TABATA

High-intensity interval training is consistently ranked as one of the most efficient ways to get into tip-top shape. This year, kick it up a notch by trying the newest fat-burning sensation: tabata training. This four-minute-interval workout

consists of 20 seconds of intense effort followed by 10 seconds of rest. Sound easy? Try it. It's a roller-coaster ride of adrenaline that will leave even the fittest in a pool of sweat.

Developed by Japanese scientist Izumi Tabata in 1996, the training promises to significantly increase the body's aerobic and anaerobic systems. It also creates what fitness professionals call the afterburn effect, which means the body continues to burn calories and body fat even after the workout has been completed. While it may sound too good to be true, the real trick is giving each interval every ounce of effort. There's a reason why this type of training is called "high intensity."

"You have to be mentally prepared," says Stuart Walker, owner and manager of ClubHaus Fitness ([clubhausfitness.com](http://clubhausfitness.com); 479-287-4287) in Fayetteville, which offers tabata classes throughout the week. "But it's a lot of fun and a more dynamic way to work out."

Don't have a tabata class nearby? Don't sweat it. There are a number of smartphone apps that count out the specific intervals and will walk users through the entire workout. Try it on a run, during a bike ride or with a jump rope. Any exercise will do, but make sure to listen to your body and go at

your own pace. Those four-minute intervals may not seem like much, but their fat blasting effects add up quickly. "Four tabatas is all anyone would need to do," cautions Walker. It's just that intense.

*Tabata classes can be found at most gyms — check local schedules for specific times. The tabata timer app is available as a free download through the iTunes store.*

#### FUSION CLASSES

Yoga is great. Yoga and pilates put together is even better. At least that's the concept behind a new wave of fitness classes popping up in gyms across the country. Fusion classes could be considered the speed dating of the fitness world. They give clients the chance to try two or more disciplines in one session.

Technically, gyms could blend together an infinite number of crazy combinations. Want to try Olympic weight lifting and Zumba? Sure, why not. But the true purpose of fusion classes is to find combinations that complement each other and deliver the best overall results.

Popular examples of fusion classes include piloxing (pilates and boxing), cycle core (spinning and abs), buff yoga (yoga with weights), aqua Zumba (Zumba and water aerobics) and yogalates (yoga and pilates).

"The main benefit is efficiency," explains Kathleen Rea, owner of Regeneration Fitness ([regenerationfitness.com](http://regenerationfitness.com); 501-324-1414) in Little Rock. She began offering yogalates classes at her studio as a way to help her clients find the flexibility of yoga and the strengthening of pilates without having to attend two different classes. "Now people don't have to be faced with trying to

last through an hour or even a 45-minute pilates class, which was just too exhausting," she says. By combining the two, she found their benefits complemented each other to such an extent that students developed better posture and ease of movement. "It's really a great way to allow people to develop their core strength, to get that toning they're looking for and leave feeling relaxed and refreshed."

*Fusion classes are offered at a variety of gyms throughout Arkansas, including Regeneration Fitness and Hot Springs Health and Fitness ([hshf.com](http://hshf.com); 501-525-4900) in Hot Springs.*

#### BODYWEIGHT

Push-ups, pull-ups and wall-sits may be effective body-weight exercises, but they also bring back nightmares of suffering through grade school PE class. Thanks to a little help from new tools like the TRX, however, body-weight exercises are quickly making a comeback as fun and efficient ways to get in seriously good shape.

The TRX — short for Total Body Resistance Exercise — consists of two adjustable nylon straps with handles. It comes with a clip that allows users to attach it to just about anything, including a tree, a set of monkey bars at the playground or a piece of equipment at the gym.

Developed by Navy SEALs as a way to maintain full-body conditioning while in the field, the TRX is now the toy of choice for personal trainers around the world. "You can make it as hard or as simple as you need it to be," says Claudia Smith, co-owner of B Fit Studio ([bfitfayetteville.com](http://bfitfayetteville.com); 479-935-4400) in Fayetteville. While she uses a variety of body-weight techniques with her clients, she likes the TRX because it offers an incredible range of versatility. "It offers a bigger repertoire of movement than any other piece of equipment," she explains. "It definitely keeps it challenging and interesting."

Body-weight exercises — with or without the help of the TRX — are important additions to any workout routine because they engage the entire body at once. "We don't just move our bodies in isolation," says Webb. But sitting at a desk all day deteriorates much of the full-body functionality we are born with, she explains. "Body-weight training is kind of going back to basics. It's the foundation of any type of exercise or movement, but you need to move well before you move better."

*TRX training can also be found at NEA Total Fitness ([neatotalfitness.com](http://neatotalfitness.com); 870-819-1013) in Jonesboro.*

#### BARRE

While ballet-inspired workouts are not new, their popularity has skyrocketed after Natalie Portman's svelte figure graced the screen in the movie "Black Swan." With promises of building the long, lean look of a dancer's body, ballet barre classes continue to be one of the most popular trends in

fitness. They blend cardio, strength training and toning exercises to provide a full-body workout with serious results. And the best part is that you don't have to be an A-list actress to sign up.

"Everybody can do it," explains Lisa Webb, owner of Fayetteville Pilates and Barre ([fayettevillepilates.com](http://fayettevillepilates.com); 479-935-4961), whose husband is a regular in the class. "Anybody can walk in the door and not feel out of place, or lost, or like they can't keep up." That's because the class contains no actual dance sequences, only easy-to-follow moves demonstrated by the instructor. "Even though it's ballet barre technique, you don't have to worry about remembering choreography," says Webb. And because the workout has foundations in pilates, every move is tailored to be safe and effective for all ages and body types. "It's very accessible, very challenging and a lot of fun," says Webb.

*Other dance-inspired classes include BarreAmped at Zenspin Studio in Little Rock and Jonesboro ([zenspinstudio.com](http://zenspinstudio.com)), barre pilates at NWA Pilates ([nwapilates.com](http://nwapilates.com); 479-586-4744) in Bentonville and ballet booty barre at World Gym in Fayetteville ([worldgymarkansas.com](http://worldgymarkansas.com); 479-521-0585).*

#### KETTLEBELL TRAINING

Need a straightforward workout that mixes strength conditioning, cardio and flexibility into one serious calorie burn? Time to try a kettlebell class.

Developed by Russian weightlifters in the 1700s, kettlebells look like cannon balls with handles. And they weigh about as much, too. But swinging and lifting these heavy lumps of metal is the secret to full-body conditioning in just 30 minutes or less.

"If you want to be leaner, if you want to burn more fat, if you want to be able to do more with your other workouts... then you need to be stronger," says Derek Miller, owner and head trainer at Ballistic Fitness in Springdale ([ballistic-fitness.com](http://ballistic-fitness.com); 479-283-8387). "Every move works your entire body and makes you stronger."

He uses kettlebells with clients from age 11 to 65 and recommends it as a great option for anyone who is not interested in spending hours at the gym. "People are so busy that they want to do something that's quick," he says. "This gives you very good results really quickly."

As with any kind of weight lifting, however, Miller recommends training with a certified instructor to help avoid injury.

*Life Warrior Fitness ([lifewarriorfitness.com](http://lifewarriorfitness.com); 501-350-9381) in Little Rock also specializes in kettlebell training.* **AL**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The gyms and fitness studios mentioned here are not meant to serve as an exhaustive list of options for these classes. Call your neighborhood gyms to see what is available.*

