

Wellbeing

Get the best out of yourself with a personal trainer

Many new year exercise resolutions fail by the end of January. But hiring an expert to keep your regime on track could be the answer. Weekend fitness editor Lucy Miller investigates

How do I find a personal trainer?

Personal recommendations are a good starting point, says Professor Greg Whyte MBE. 'While qualifications are central to quality assurance, effective personal training is a very personal relationship,' says Greg. 'Hearing from a friend about what their trainer is doing with them and if they are reliable, motivational and fun is reassuring.'

If you're already a member of a gym, most will have their own selection of PTs. Try to watch them at work – do they seem fully engaged with their clients during a session, and is their training style compatible with what you want? (Bear in mind gyms which have their own PTs will often not allow external PTs to train clients on the premises.)

Otherwise, check the Register of Exercise Professionals (Reps), an independent public register of qualified and insured health and fitness professionals in the UK. A Reps level 3 qualification is a starting point.

How do I choose the right PT for me?

Trial them during a taster session. 'A good PT should always meet with a client before taking them on,' says Nix Ticehurst, founder of Nixercise. 'This meeting should be a free, informal exchange to see if you both feel you could work well together. The trainer should explain exactly how they train and the format of their sessions.'

Do you find them motivating and inspiring? Are you looking for gentle encouragement or a boot-camp boss? This is someone with whom you'll build a working relationship, so personalities need to fit.

How much will it cost?

'Trainers differ in pricing – and it's no secret they can be expensive, but more money doesn't always mean a better PT,' says Ben Shenel, of Make A Difference Fitness. 'Hour-long sessions tend to start around £30 to £40, but your trainer may do a deal if you sign up for 10 sessions.'

A cheaper option is group training. 'If you

could train with two or three of your friends, this would be cheaper,' says Nix. 'But it's still very intimate with a session tailored to your collective goals.' It's an extra motivation, but only works if you and your friends have similar ideas on training and times.

What's the goal?

Why are you engaging a trainer? Are you aiming to run a marathon or train for a sport? Do you want to lose weight or get fit before a milestone birthday or holiday? Be clear about what you want to achieve and whether the trainer feels this is attainable and he or she has expertise in this area.

Where will we train?

'The point of a PT is that they should fit smoothly into your life, which makes exercise fun and easy to stick to,' explains Ben. 'If you go to a gym they can train you there – if not, you train at home or in the park.' Some PTs share training spaces, and all should supply the equipment needed for your session. You should also get a practical plan for training in between sessions to maximise results.

OUR EXPERTS

• **Ben Shenel**
Professional boxing coach, personal trainer and life coach, Make A Difference Fitness
makeadifferencefitness.co.uk

• **Professor Greg Whyte MBE**
Former Olympian and sports scientist.
gregwhyte.com

• **Nix Ticehurst**
Personal Trainer and Founder of Nixercise.
nixercise.co.uk



'MIKE IS OUR MEDICINE' Renée May, 45, Kent

'I've been training with Mike Millen (left) for four years. He understands me and pushes me to try new things and take care of myself. Mike was recommended by a friend and he trains me and my husband Lee around four times a week. He comes to us every morning and we either train in our home gym or in the garden. Having a reliable PT saves us time and means my husband and I can train together before the day begins. Mike is our medicine – he's training our bodies but he's also amazing for our minds and our overall wellbeing.'

Will I lose weight?

If this is one of your goals look for a trainer who will help you track your intake with a food diary, monitor your body fat and BMI, advise on nutrition, and tailor your programme towards burning fat.

Ideally your PT is there to provide a set of skills to help you achieve your aims and set a plan you can follow outside that training period.

'Find out what other things your PT may offer – usually they can do personalised nutrition plans or movement analysis sessions. Some offer massage therapy too – it's about the whole package,' says Ben. 'They need to encourage you to rest well, sleep and eat well, keep your stress levels in check as well as train regularly. It isn't just about that hour a week.'



'SHE'S A GREAT TRAINER WHO HAS CHANGED MY LIFE FOR THE BETTER'

Anna Passingham, 51, Wallingford

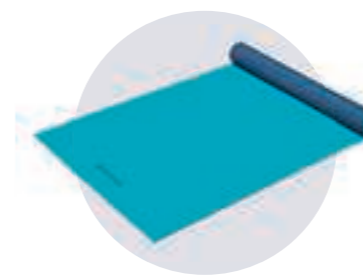
'I find gyms dull and isolating, so when I was told about a local personal trainer, Nix Ticehurst, I was intrigued. My BMI was high and I'd tried previously to lose weight via swimming and gym workouts. Nothing seemed to motivate me – until I met Nix!

'After a few one-to-one sessions she persuaded me to try one of her classes and now I'm hooked. I love working out outside amongst other like-minded individuals – the healthy competition and motivation helps push me. The weight has fallen off, my confidence has sky-rocketed, I've learned boxing and hula-hooping and made amazing friends. Nix is great trainer, with a great community that has changed my life.'

NO TRAIN NO GAIN
Hiring a personal trainer will offer that extra bit of motivation you may be looking for

GET KITTED OUT

Order from johnlewis.com, then Click & Collect at your nearest Waitrose & Partners store



GAIAM YOGA MAT £26.49

A nice fresh yoga mat is always a good idea. It's then yours to take to the park, gym or use at home – wherever your session may be.



REEBOK FOREVER FLOATRIDE ENERGY WOMEN'S RUNNING SHOES £84.95

A lightweight, cushioned sports shoe.



CAROLINE GARDNER AS LIVE WELL JOURNAL £22

Use this journal to track your food and workouts so you can look back and see what's worked and what hasn't.



24 HOURS ON MY PLATE SUSIE VANNER

The singer and former Bond girl is partial to fish, salad – and a pain au raisin or two

'Waking up at around 6, I went for a walk-run in my local park. Back home I had a homemade green juice – celery with cucumber, ginger and half a lemon – before doing 45 minutes of yoga. After that I breakfasted on steamed wild salmon with alfalfa sprouts.

'I spent the morning doing radio interviews and in meetings. I never have elevenses but I do carry around water which I sip on throughout the day. I aim to drink two and a half to three litres a day. Lunch with a friend in a restaurant was sea bass with rocket and cucumber salad, steamed beans and broccoli.

'After yet another meeting, around 5pm I had a mint tea with some blueberries and nuts. I adore nuts.

'I wasn't very hungry in the evening so just had some roast chicken slices left over from the day before with some gluten-free toast, and a rocket and tomato salad plus a couple of squares of 90% dark chocolate.

'I love food and used to do lots of cooking but have become a bit lazy recently. I've become especially conscious of healthy eating since my breast cancer diagnosis 12 years ago. I don't deprive myself, however, and believe if I eat healthily most of the time I can be a bit more indulgent occasionally. And when I'm in France I can't resist a pain au raisin.'

Susie Vanner's new album *In These Shoes* is out on 6 March 2020

THE VERDICT

Emma Williams, Partner & Nutritionist, says

'Salmon is rich in omega 3 for your brain, heart and vision. You met your 5 a day and fluid needs – one 150ml serving of juice counts as 1 of your 5 a day. Nuts (unsalted) are powerhouses of nutrition. Consuming starchy carbs with every meal will give



you more energy as recommended by the eatwell guide – carbs don't cause weight gain, rather what you add to them. Think brown bread (seeded), pasta and rice with healthy accompaniments.' 4/5