

Fitness focus

Motivation

By now, more than half of those of us who attempted to lose weight or start a work-out regime in the New Year have dropped off the healthy bandwagon. But help is at hand: fitness guru Jamie Baird has some sterling advice for getting and staying motivated, whether you are starting a new gym regime or simply want a flatter stomach. 'The most important thing,' Jamie says, 'is to plan for hiccups or failures along the way. Don't expect to be a saint with your new regime, whether it's healthy eating or exercise. You'll have days when it all goes wrong, so just go with it and, most importantly, don't stop all the good work and fall back into your old habits just because you've had one setback. The other crucial thing is to get started.' Here are 10 of the best tips we know for kick-starting a regime. **LUCIA FERRARI**



KEEP ON JUMPIN'
Sweaty Betty's skipping rope and mat

to slim your ankles or lose half a stone. If you haven't achieved your goal by an agreed date, you have to take the other person out to a restaurant of their choice.'

1 'Something a lot of my clients do that really works,' says Jamie, 'is make a bet with someone before they start on a body-reshaping plan. Give yourself a realistic time limit and a realistic goal, whether it's

2 Go shopping: Nuala's new vest tops are sexy and flattering. The 'Y Back' top with bra, £50, at Harvey Nichols (020 7235 5000), is incredibly slimming.

3 If you start now, you can have a flat stomach by June. Think of a fantastic bikini as inspiration - for us, it's Melissa Odabash's Ibiza bikini, £105 from Heidi Klein (020 7243 5665). The best flat-stomach exercise is the bicycle crunch: lie flat on your back and extend your legs parallel to the floor, then raise the upper body into an ab-crunch position and stretch and contract alternating legs. Do 20 slow, focused ones followed by 20 really fast ones. Aim to do this three times a week.

4 Book a personal trainer to help you stick to a new fitness regime. The Tonic (020 8405 1727) is a new company that has a network of fully qualified, experienced personal trainers all over

the UK. They even do fitness-by-phone coaching.

5 For thinner thighs, book a body treatment that really works. The Guam seaweed mud toning and cellulite treatment, £75, at the Urban Retreat at Harrods (020 7893 8333) is one of the few that is truly effective for the legs; thighs look tighter and more toned after a single session.

6 Jamie Baird swears by the reward method: 'Think of something you really want and treat yourself when you've achieved your goal.' For us, it's an iPod, £249, and leather Dior iPod carrying case, about £145 from Selfridges (08708 377377) - perfect for the treadmill.

7 Matt Roberts and Anya Hindmarch have joined forces to produce a gorgeous gym bag, £345 (020 7439 8899).

8 Try skipping - it's one of the quickest ways to build up stamina and is also great for strengthening bones and developing co-ordination. A rope fits in your handbag and so is fantastic for travelling. When you start, skip for numbers (try starting with 100 skips), not for time, because it's less monotonous. We love Sweaty Betty's skipping rope, £10 (0800 169 3889), which coordinates with a work-out mat, £17.

9 Jamie also advises booking a holiday: 'Basically, you know you have to get in shape and so have more chance of sticking to your body-reshaping plan.'

10 One of the best ways to make sure you actually get round to exercising is to write your sessions in your diary. Fitness trainer and life coach Peter Crone says: 'The fact that you have it written down means you are more likely to do it than if you just say you will.' □

KIT ME QUICK
Left: Melissa Odabash's bikini.
Below: gym bag by Matt Roberts and Anya Hindmarch



TUNE IN, WORK OUT
iPod in Dior leather carrying case