

Get year off to healthy, fit start

By ERICA CORSANO

Whether you're giving your lifestyle a serious makeover for the new year or just tweaking some bad habits in order to live healthier, it's easy to start out with great intentions that fizzle out. Fortunately, we found local experts with great tips and tricks to help you hit that reset button and make the changes last.

Jody Merrill, founder/owner and instructor at Btone Fitness Studios in the Back Bay, North End, Lexington, Sudbury and Wellesley, has words of encouragement for those just starting out.

1. "Remember this: You are not alone when it comes to starting a new fitness regime. Everyone starts out as a 'newbie' at some point and there is nothing more intimidating than walking

into a gym of any kind for the first time — especially if you are not feeling your best. To set yourself up for success, keep an open mind and make sure you are not too hard on yourself when it comes to setting goals. Be realistic. Don't think everything is going to change overnight.

2. "Group classes can be really motivating and can make working out seem fun for those who are just starting out. Be sure to introduce yourself to others in the class around you.

3. "To make the workout as effective as possible for you, listen to your body. Good instructors are always teaching a scalable workout, so be sure to give yourself the extra support



PARTIN

and take that modification if it helps to ensure a better form. If you train smarter from the get-go, you'll be-

gin to gain that confidence and endurance, and then a newbie will be looking to you for that motivation in no time!"

Dr. Joseph A. Russo, plastic surgeon in Newton Centre and director of the HCG Diet Program at Dream Spa Medical in Canton and Brookline, shares his top weight-loss and wellness tips for those trying to get back on track and recover from holiday indulgences.

1. "Eat cleanly. Although convenient, processed food



RUSSO

is a real detriment to our health and weight since our bodies are not really made to process processed foods. Once the first few days of detox have passed, you will feel your body thank you."

2. "Invest in preparation. When we take the time to prepare healthy meals and snacks, we are giving ourselves tremendous advantages and self-nurturing. We can dictate what it is that we eat, keep our choices cleaner and have good options when we need them rather than reaching for something processed or unhealthy."

3. "Increase lean protein. Most Americans don't realize how little lean protein we tend to eat, and it is so important to our muscles



MERRILL

and metabolism. Lean protein is also a great bang for your buck as it provides a lot of satisfaction and is low in calories. (Shakes and bars don't count! Keep it to

protein found in nature.)" **Mark Partin**, co-owner and founder of B/SPOKE, the indoor cycling studio and lifestyle brand in Boston's financial district,