

WELL AND GOOD

COMPILED BY LIZZIE GORE-GRIMES

Make it a journey to a better you this year – with our round-up of restorative Irish retreats, sunny, spirit-lifting escapes and inspired health and fitness tips for the year ahead.

POSITIVE FITNESS Liz Costigan, trainer and health guru, shares her refreshingly accessible tips for getting in better shape in 2016.

- 1 Don't give everything up come the first of January.** It just makes you miserable. Instead, simply replace and reduce – swap white carbs for brown, one coffee a day instead of three, replace milk chocolate for dark.
- 2 Take time to think about what you truly want.** Often, we set goals based on other people's ideas of health/fitness success. Set mindful goals – think about your life and commitments. Do what is right for you.
- 3 Take baby steps.** Even if you feel only giant ones will get you to your goal. It is the culmination of small changes that makes a lasting difference.
- 4 Choose a type exercise that's right for you.** You don't have to start running marathons. Find what you love and do more of it.
- 5 Try not to think about changing yourself.** It is human to be vain, but it is also really important to accept that how we look changes, and a lot of the time we don't have control over that. Accepting your body and learning to love its imperfections is the key to feeling happier in your skin.
- 6 Diets don't work.** They encourage you to eat in a way that's not sustainable. Think about balance – this goes for every area of your life. Try to stick with the 80/20 rule: 80 per cent of the time you're eating healthily and being active; the other 20, you can be less focused and let go!



WINTER SUN YOGA Time to warm the bones, rest the mind and rejuvenate the body. Yes, please! Join Michael Ryan for a week in Tenerife's beautiful Hacienda Cristoforo retreat centre in February, for seven days of yoga, meditation and delicious vegetarian food – not to mention some downtime by the pool. Michael teaches a form of mindful yoga, interweaving meditation and his passion for philosophy and poetry into the physical practice. He has studied with some of the world's leading yogis and holds an internationally accredited 500-hour Yoga Alliance Certificate. February 20-27; price includes accommodation, meals, all yoga and meditation classes, €795 (sharing) or €995 (single). Flights and transfers not included, michaelryan yoga.com; haciendacristoforo.com.

- 7 Remember what's important.** Yes, being fit and healthy is incredibly important, but try not to get too caught up in it all. Focus on self-care rather than self-berating.
- 8 Try something new.** There are so many options out there; give everything a go – the same goes for food and exercise.
- 9 Be kind to yourself.** Make sure to rest. Downtime is integral to your "regime". The body and mind need time to heal.
- 10 Keep a food and fitness diary.** A diary will help give you a clear picture of your patterns and allow you to identify where improvements can be made.

Find Liz Costigan at positivefitnessproject.com.



THANK G IT'S FRIDAY! ENJOY OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION WITH A THREE-COURSE DINNER AT GALWAY'S G HOTEL, FOLLOWED BY A LEISURELY BREAKFAST NEXT MORNING, FROM €125 PER PERSON SHARING, 091 865 200; THEG.IE.

3 Invigorating Escapes Clear out those cobwebs and start afresh in 2016 with an action-packed getaway. Here, Kate Phelan picks three of the best ...

CLIMBING IN CONNEMARA Spanning 300 acres of sprawling Connemara forest, Delphi Adventure Resort promises an energising escape. Take a surf lesson on Cross Beach, a mountain bike ride along forest trails, or hike up Connacht's highest peak, before retiring for a restorative steam in their spa's thermal suite. A two-night package including one day of activities and spa hour starts from €197 pps B&B, 095 42208; delphi.ie.



KAYAKING IN WEST CORK The two-night kayaking break at Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa offers a romantic take on your typical adventure getaway. Luxurious bedrooms overlook the Atlantic, which can be explored at closer range with a guided moonlight kayak. Lucky paddlers may even witness bioluminescence – when marine life lights up the water. From €240 pps B&B, 023 883 3143; inchydoneyisland.com.



CYCLING IN WESTPORT The Great Western Greenway, Ireland's longest off-road walking and cycling trail, boasts 42 traffic-free kilometres, best explored by bike – and ideally with a picnic and no strict set schedule. Knockranny House Hotel's Greenway Getaway includes two nights' B&B for two adults and two children plus bicycle and helmet hire. From €129 pps (kids under 10 go free), 098 28 600; knockrannyhousehotel.ie.

