



Ricardo Riskalla is one of Australia's leading Fitness and Health experts. Contacting Ricardo is the first step to living a healthy lifestyle.

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MAKE THE SWITCH

Forget exhausting health and fitness overhauls. The latest way to reach your best bridal self involves realistic tweaks which make sticking to your goals a breeze. By Remy Rippon.

1 Cut back on cortisol

Dubbed the stress hormone, cortisol is responsible for a host of problems including weight gain and high blood pressure. Swap out high-intensity interval training – known to spike cortisol – for long and slow walks instead. “Walking is still the best exercise, as it tones the whole body and is easily accessible,” says fitness trainer Ricardo Riskalla.

2 Magic magnesium

Magnesium helps the body adapt to stress, so up your intake of foods rich in the mineral – leafy greens, almonds, dried figs and cashews.

3 Use your body

Free weights build muscle. Exercises that use your own body weight – think squats, planks, walking lunges and standing push-ups – lengthen limbs and add tone and definition.

4 Quench your thirst

Among a long list of benefits, water plumps out skin, regulates appetite, aids digestion and boosts the immune system. “If you struggle to drink plain water, try adding fresh berries and herbs for taste as well as nutrition,” says nutritionist and chef Zoe Bingley-Pullin.

5 Rethink recovery

In pursuit of a fitness goal, it can be easy to overdo it. But overtraining does more harm than good. “Make sure you have two days off exercise every week,” says Riskalla, noting that muscle repair and strength is built on the days off.

6 Tap out

“Recovery can also help minimise the level of stress mentally,” says Zach Vickers, personal trainer and founder of Undercard boxing. Infrared saunas, meditation and getting the required hours of sleep per night can ease a weary mind and body. “Look to use recovery as a milestone and know that it gives you more clarity,” he says.

7 Trust your timeline

Three months is ample time for healthy changes to become habit. “It should allow you to achieve any realistic goal you may have set and is a manageable time frame for staying focussed,” says Vickers.



8 Wake up to protein

“Research has shown consuming a serve of protein in the morning can help prevent snacking and grazing later in the day,” says Bingley-Pullin, calling out good sources in lean meat, fish, dairy, eggs, legumes, tofu and nuts.

9 Changing it up

Adjusting the type and intensity of your exercise can pique motivation and target different areas of the body. Cardio will torch calories, resistance training will build muscle, while pilates will increase flexibility and stave off injuries.

10 Cut back on cocktails

Alcohol is dehydrating (hello, tired face) and increases the likelihood of making poor food decisions. “In the lead-up to your big day, replace alcohol with mocktails such as soda or coconut water mixed with fresh fruit and herbs,” says Bingley-Pullin.