



*Your alternative*

# NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

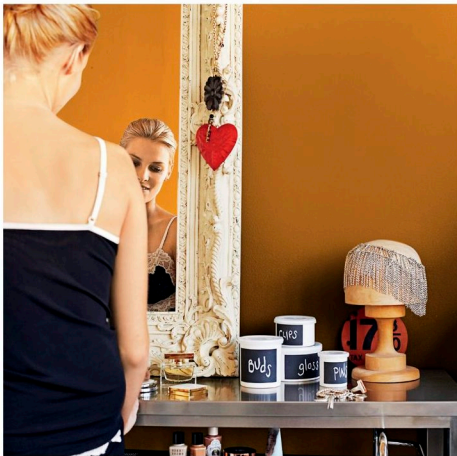
Commit to your most fulfilling year yet, with these alternative resolutions. *By Bonnie Cleaver*

The start of a new year is a great time to introduce healthy habits into your life. But rather than just focusing on diet and fitness, we've put together a list of alternative resolutions that will enrich your life on all levels: mind, body and spirit. They're enjoyable, easy to do and don't require superhuman willpower. In fact, you may just find yourself sticking to them throughout January – and for months to come.



## MONITOR MY THOUGHTS

"When you have a thought, you're putting in an order to the universe for what you want your experience to be, so if you're constantly putting out negative thoughts, that's what you'll attract," says Karina Godwin, director of the Flying Souls Institute of Healing. She suggests checking in on your thoughts throughout the day. When you catch yourself thinking negatively, say, 'Ah, stop that!' and flip the thought to the positive opposite. "The more you do this, the easier it becomes and you find your negative thoughts just drop away," assures Godwin.



## START THE DAY WITH MIRROR WORK

"One of the biggest problems many of us have is we don't love ourselves, but mirror work helps change that, allowing us to take positive steps forward in our lives," says Susie Mulholland, head instructor for Heal Your Life workshops in Australia and New Zealand. "First thing in the morning when you've done your hair and make-up, take 10 seconds to look into your eyes, affirming, 'I love and approve of you,' or 'I really love you, let's have a magical day!'" If you struggle to begin with, simply add, 'I am willing to... ' at the start of the sentence.

### HAVE A MUG OF HOT WATER WITH LEMON



Make this your morning ritual and your gut will thank you. "LEMON JUICE HELPS THE LIVER PRODUCE BILE, WHICH IS A MILD NATURAL LAXATIVE," explains naturopath Mim Beim. It's also a source of vitamin C – team it with a drizzle of antimicrobial manuka honey for a resilient immune system year-round. ▶

EVERY  
WEEK  
I WILL...

## MEDITATE

Making time to still your mind has immediate and long-term benefits. "Within minutes of meditating, your heart rate slows, blood pressure normalises and both hemispheres of the brain start cycling together, creating a feeling of harmony," says Kevin Hume, director of the Sydney Meditation Centre. "Over time, meditation literally rewires

the brain, improving attention, memory and the ability to make measured responses."

Until you find a style that suits you, the 'loving kindness' meditation is a good start. Simply spend 10 minutes focusing on people you are fond of, repeating, 'May 'X' be well and happy.'



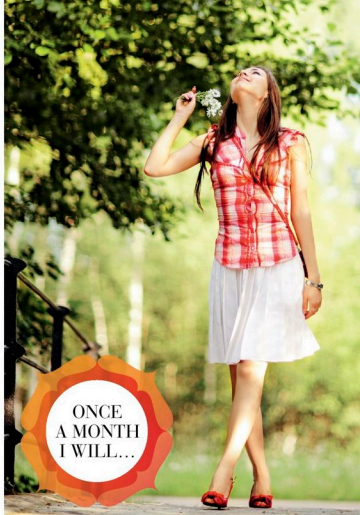
## DRY BRUSH MY SKIN



Dry brushing exfoliates skin and encourages new cell growth. "It also improves blood circulation and lymphatic drainage, which promotes detoxification," adds Beim. To dry brush, use a natural bristled brush. Starting at your feet, brush upwards in circular movements, working towards your heart. Once you've covered your lower body, belly, back and arms, massage in some almond oil, then hop in the shower.

## CLEANSE MY ENERGIES

Regular cleansing of your aura, the energy field around your body, is vital. "When your energy is clear and balanced, you feel amazing – you're more vibrant, you have clarity and a sense of optimism," says Godwin. Try this visualisation: Imagine yourself in a clearing in the bush, facing a waterfall and small shallow pool. Imagine stepping under the waterfall and notice the water is a silvery, sparkly blue. This water is magical! It can dissolve negative energies from your mind, body and spirit. Soak yourself in this magic, allowing it to saturate your body. When you're ready, emerge feeling renewed and refreshed.



## SPEND TIME IN NATURE

Whether it's a bushwalk, gardening or sitting under a tree at the park, time in nature helps you recharge on a deep level. "Nature is filled with life-force energy that interacts with our energy field, in turn lifting our energy," explains Annie Evans, energetic healer, teacher and author of *Live the Life You Long For* (Allen & Unwin, \$24.99). "To get the most benefits, breathe and be present in nature."

## GET A MASSAGE

It may sound indulgent, but regular massage is one of the easiest ways to boost your overall wellbeing, with benefits ranging from reduced aches and pains to improved mood and mental alertness, according to the University of Miami's Touch Research Institute. Need more convincing? **THINK OF MASSAGE AS PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE!** US experts found a single session spikes levels of disease-fighting white blood cells.



## TRY A NEW SUPERFOOD

From acai berries to chia seeds, there's a raft of superfoods in health food stores that can inspire culinary creativity – and improve your nutrient intake. "Most are plant foods and contain all sorts of antioxidants and phytonutrients that are incredibly valuable for our health," says Tabitha McIntosh, naturopath and clinical nutritionist at Awaken Your Health. Here's a few to get you started:



### QUINOA

Rich in protein, iron and magnesium, this nutty-tasting seed is delicious with curry, Bolognese or roast vegetables.



### RAW CACAO POWDER

Unlike most chocolate, raw cacao is minimally processed, making it antioxidant-dense. Use it for hot chocolates and desserts.



### CHIA SEEDS

Packed with fibre, protein and omega-3s, chia seeds can be sprinkled onto cereal, smoothies and omelettes.

SEVERAL  
TIMES  
A YEAR  
I WILL...

Use smoke  
to shift stuck  
energy from  
your home

## SPACE CLEAR MY HOME

A ritual intended to revitalise the energies in a home, space clearing every few months helps you think clearly, feel positive and manifest your goals, says Michelle Frencham of Empowering Space. Here's how to do it:

**OPEN ALL WINDOWS AND DOORS IN YOUR HOUSE.** Using a sage stick (from New Age stores), proceed clockwise through the house, sweeping the stick along walls and into corners. As you go, say, 'I clear all negative energy from this house.'

**REPEAT THE PROCESS, THIS TIME RINGING A BELL OR CLAPPING YOUR HANDS.** Bring in a positive affirmation – this could relate to a goal or be something general like, 'I invoke positive energy for all who live here.'

## SYNC WITH THE SEASONS

Eating in harmony with the seasons is central to traditional Chinese medicine, thought to promote health by supporting our intrinsic connection to the environment, says Glenys Savage, of Health Spring Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic. Try these dietary tweaks:



### Summer

Limit hot, spicy, barbecued and fried foods, which create excessive heat in the body. Include salads, fruits, bitter and sweet-tasting foods.



### Autumn

Avoid eating too many dry or spicy foods, which can aggravate the lungs. 'Moistening' foods like figs, pears and watercress are good.



### Winter

Enjoy hearty soups and stews to build your internal energy. Limit cold foods or drinks, which cause sluggish digestion.



### Spring

A light diet including plenty of green vegetables and some sprouted seeds will help the body rejuvenate after winter.

**TREAT MYSELF TO AN ENERGETIC HEALING** Brilliant for tackling illness and emotional distress, energetic healing is also beneficial as a 'tune up' if you're stressed or out of sorts. "It's for anyone who wants to come back to that sense of peace and harmony in their body, thoughts and emotions," says Evans. Start your search for a healer at [www.naturaltherapypages.com.au](http://www.naturaltherapypages.com.au). ◊