

Seven simple ways to build a summer body in winter

 By [Janine Fourie](#)

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Rome wasn't built in a day and neither are summer bodies . As we move into the second half of the year, perhaps now is the time to revisit those New Year health-and-fitness resolutions we made at the beginning of the year.

How are yours coming along? Have the gym visits tapered off with the cold, dark winter mornings? Have the fresh, healthy salads been ditched for stodgy, comfort foods?



Start where you are, do what you can

Well, consider me your mid-year motivator to kickstart your regimen, so that you avoid the end-of-year anxiety when the beach season is just around the corner. Starting six months before the summer holidays (instead of six weeks) removes the panic, any drastic behaviour and means you should be sporting a sleeker, healthier you by the time you hit the beach.

Reboot the exercise habit and make better food choices now, so that you're not compelled to do anything extreme later on. Move more and eat less (or at least in moderation) is a sensible approach – increase your water intake and cut out the bad stuff like fizzy drinks, highly-processed foods or those packed with sugar or artificial sweeteners.

Don't be tempted to tackle a fad diet – one that claims a rapid weight loss, is usually unbalanced and unhealthy and any weight that is lost will be more water weight, not fat.

Seven simple ways you can build your summer body:

1. Increase your intake of fruit and veggies and incorporate elements of the raw food lifestyle.
2. Replace the amount of cooked food with raw food: like substituting your cereal, oats or toast with fresh, seasonal fruit in the morning, having a smoothie or more fruit at lunchtime instead of a sandwich or chips and replacing your cooked dinner at night with a large green salad with tomatoes.

3. Replace salty crisps with nuts and seeds for a snack or treat yourself to a block or two of dark chocolate, but not the whole slab at once.
4. Use blenders and liquidisers – minimise eating anything out of a packet or box and remember fresh is best!
5. Avoid fried foods and takeaways and make the move towards using healthy fats in the kitchen.
6. Use olive oil in salad dressings, sauces, pesto, hummus or roasting and sautéing veggies at low heat.
7. Use canola oil when baking or cooking at higher temperatures and ditch any other oils hiding in your pantry.



Curcumin, the immune booster

During all these lifestyle changes in winter, bolster the immune system by incorporating turmeric into your meals. The various compounds in this bright-orange spice have many medicinal properties (especially curcumin, its main active ingredient). Curcumin is a super-hero in the spice world and is predominantly a very strong antioxidant and powerful anti-inflammatory. It plays a beneficial role in improving brain and memory function and fighting heart disease as well as ailments in other parts of the body (including cancer, Alzheimer's, arthritis, depression, anti-ageing and so much more).

However, curcumin has a low absorption in the body and one way of improving this is by adding black pepper when cooking with turmeric. The pepper contains a key chemical, piperine which aids absorption in the body. Turmeric also has a low solubility in water – blending the spice with oils such as flaxseed, coconut or olive oil helps to retain its benefits.

Certain enzymes can also deactivate curcumin. Foods which contain quercetin inhibit this process, these include red grapes, red wine, green tea, apples, berries, raw spinach, broccoli, sweet peppers and onions.

With this action plan in hand there's no excuse for not creating your summer body this winter. Let's go!

ABOUT JANINE FOURIE

Chef Janine Fourie is the head chef at Big Easy Winebar & Grill in Durban.

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