



Can that wave of New Year's motivation take you past February and keep you going all the way through 2013?
Picture: GETTY IMAGES

There must be some way to avoid falling off the pledge after the new year midnight hour, so **RIKKI-LEE ARNOLD** tries to discover how

WHETHER it's the best night of your life or a continual letdown, New Year's Eve will always be billed as the biggest party night of the year.

So big in fact, it's left a few of us with some pretty hazy memories of how we saw in 2013.

One tradition that is almost always forgotten just weeks or even days after January 1 is a person's new year's resolution.

From promises to give up

smoking to goals for running a marathon, these resolutions are often discarded for various reasons.

Brett Ipson, Goodlife Health Clubs Regional Fitness Director in Queensland, says the numbers of those ditching health-related resolutions are evident when you look at the drop off in membership after January.

"January and February are two of our busiest months in terms of gym

use and new members joining," Ipson says.

"A lot of this stems from new year resolutions but most aren't followed through on.

"There is only a small percentage of people who actually make it past January or February."

So, why do we struggle to stay true to our new year resolutions?





And why do we feel the need to make them at all?

MAKE IT AND BREAK IT

Author and national director of Back in Motion Health Group, Jason Smith, says the problem is that new year resolutions are a "gimmick". And gimmicks don't work in the long term.

According to Smith, people feel the need to make a resolution, even if they don't mean it, because of how they feel during the Christmas holiday break.

"It comes from an internal appreciation that we're not living as well as we could," Smith says.

"We all have a sense we could live a lot better. At Christmas and new year we sometimes feel the worst physically because we eat and drink too much and don't sleep enough.

"Not only were we resting from the stresses of work but we had more time to think about our wellness and health."

Despite the intent to make a change, Smith believes most people fail because they put so much focus on making this change after New Year's Eve.

"The people who don't break their resolutions are those who don't wait for the new year to make a change," he says.

"Every day is a great day for a new year resolution or a whole year resolution. Every day is a great day to realise you're not living at your best."

IT CAN BE DONE

Despite the hardship of turning the new year resolution into a "whole year" resolution, Smith says it can be, and has been, done.

Brendan Goundar is one who made himself a promise and stuck to it — for the most part.

The 20-year-old gave up alcohol for seven months last year after pledging to lose weight and stop drinking.

He ended the sober stretch in

August for a friend's 21st but says he has no regrets over not making the full year.

"I was never disappointed by what I did," Goundar says.

"In that time I lost a fair bit of weight and I just felt fresh. That's the best way for me to describe it.

"It was definitely tempting when I went out or to parties. My mates didn't see the point in it at first and there was no real support.

"But it became easier and around the four or five-month mark they started to really respect it."

Goundar says the reason he stuck to his promise was due to the positive changes in his body.

Knowing he was achieving his goals was enough motivation for him to keep going but he says he would do it differently next time.

For this year, he has once again given up alcohol and pledged himself to clean, healthy eating.

However he says the trick is to set a realistic target and he will enjoy a few more Coronas again after six months alcohol-free.



1. Understand the bigger picture: Whether your goal is to quit smoking, cut out sugar or start pilates, don't just decide on the goal but understand how it will help you down the track — reducing stress, looking better or preventing disease.

2. Diarise and prioritise: Schedule everything — regular exercise, grocery shopping for better eating or organising your social life to sleep better.

3. Do not fly solo: If you're going to make a resolution for change, do it with people around you who can hold you accountable. People who climb

Mt Everest or sail around the world still have a team around them.

4. Consider the concept of life fitness: If you've set yourself an outrageous resolution, such as dropping 10kg or running a marathon when you've never even jogged, adjust this now. Make resolutions to improve your life day by day in little ways.

5. Give it time: Those who abandon their goals have a quick-fix mentality. Our bodies require time to change and there is a limit to how fast anyone can change. Don't kill your resolution.