

# SEXY NEW YEAR, SEXY NEW YOU!

Good health is like the perfect little black dress—it makes you feel as great as you look. Here's how to get the LBD feeling all year, no Spanx required

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**E**very January 1, we vow to start eating healthier and to hit the gym regularly. And every year by February 1, we've backslid right into a cheesecake and the only thing that gym membership is reducing is our bank account, leaving us feeling demoralized and defeated. This year let's flip the script. Forget about setting resolutions that have negative connotations like "I have to lose weight" or "I have to eat less." Instead, let's resolve to get what we really want: to be more vibrant, active and confident, and to feel great and look good while doing it.

"Rather than focusing on the negative, women should focus on the powerful and beneficial reasons to get mentally, emotionally and physically healthy," says Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D., a psychologist, empowerment coach and associate professor of psychology at Pepperdine University. "All that good health and well-being is sexy, and shifting your focus to what you want to become can increase the odds you'll stick to those goals this year."

We've got great tips to help you get your sexy back for 2014.



## LOVE YOUR ALARM CLOCK

Instead of hitting snooze and lying in bed for a few extra seconds...that turn into minutes...that turn into "I'm late!" start your day off right by getting your blood pumping. Kathy Brown, a personal trainer from North Canton, Ohio, and cocreator of the Sitacise fitness program, says this top-of-the-morning routine will "increase blood flow, strengthen your core, get rid of love handles and help boost your energy in less than five minutes."

- Stand at the side of the bed, with feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent. Place your hands on your hips and walk in place for 30 seconds.

- Next place hands on your hips and bend slowly to the left, return to center and then bend slowly to the right. Repeat five to ten times on each side.

- Keeping your hands on your hips, do "trunk twist" by turning your torso to the left and then to the right. Repeat five to ten times on each side.

- Then slowly bend at the waist to reach down and touch your shins. Return to standing and repeat five to ten times.

- Finally, stand up straight with hands on hips. Raise your hands over your head and clap. Hold for one to two seconds, then lower your arms down to your hips. Repeat five to ten times.

## BREW YOUR WAY TO A GREAT BOTTOM HALF

While your morning cup of joe is brewing, try these quick

and easy butt- and leg-toning moves from Danielle Girdano, a certified master personal trainer in Dallas, and Maria Brilaki, founder of fitness reloaded.com in Menlo Park, California. Alternate one of these steps daily to stay in the sexy groove all week long.

- **Do knee-ups.** Stand straight and contract your abs. March in place by lifting your knees (chest high if you can). Give yourself extra props if you swing arms as well!

- **Pop a squat.** Stand with your legs hip width apart and feet turned slightly outward. Put your hands on your waist or loosely clasp them behind your head. Bend your knees and lower your butt while keeping your back straight, aiming for your hips to be even with (or lower than) your knees. Hold the pose for three seconds and then return to a standing position. Repeat the movement until your coffee is done. Then challenge yourself to hold the position one second more every few days.

- **Go on tippy toes.** Stand at the counter and raise your heels off the ground as if you're reaching for something on a high shelf. If you're unsteady, lightly place your hands on the counter for balance. "You need to feel yourself lifting your body weight in your calves," says Girdano. Hold the pose for one to two seconds and slowly lower your heels to the ground. Repeat for 30 to 45 seconds or the entire time your coffee is brewing.

## SWAP CAFFEINE FOR PROTEIN

Tired of slogging through your workday or fighting those midday head bobs?

Rather than trying to sip yourself awake with energy drinks and endless cups of caffeinated beverages, add lean protein to your meals and snacks for a longer-lasting energy boost. A cup of plain, nonfat Greek yogurt with berries for breakfast, a handful of almonds as a mid-morning snack or a three-ounce piece of salmon at lunch will help you power through your day without adding a ton of sugary

you're sick of always seeing a glass that's half empty or you're often feuding with friends, you might want to rethink lunch. Start by steering clear of drive-through lanes. Several studies have linked eating junk food to having a sour or sad mood. And Australian researchers found women who consume a healthy mix of whole grains, veggies and lean meats instead of processed

INSTEAD OF SIPPING  
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calories to your diet. "High-protein foods also help you feel full longer, which, in turn, can help you avoid snacking," says Ian K. Smith, M.D., cohost of *The Doctors* and best-selling author of *Shred: The Revolutionary Diet* (St. Martin's Press).

At dinner, look beyond skinless chicken or lean red meat for protein options. "I alternate," says Amore Leighton Black, 41, a New York City mom of a 9-year-old. "If I eat meat on Monday, on Tuesday I might have a dish made with lentils or a red bean salad."

The amount of protein women need depends on individual weight and physical activity level. Smith says about 50 grams a day is fine for women who aren't pregnant or lactating.

## EAT YOUR WAY TO HAPPY

If your short fuse has you snapping at loved ones,

meat products (like fast-food burgers, deli meats or sausage), sweet drinks and salty snacks are less likely to feel depressed or experience anxiety—two things that could leave you feeling anything but alluring.

## EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO BARE ARMS

Going sleeveless is sexy. Especially if you're sporting First Lady-style biceps. These moves from Girdano will help you get a jump-start on warm-weather dressing now.

- Sit at a desk or table that is secured to a wall or heavy enough that it won't move or tip over, with feet flat on the floor. Place your hands, with palms flat, on the underside of the desk and arms should be bent at a 90-degree angle. Tighten your abdominals and push your palms against the table, gradually increasing▷



the force until you're pressing as hard as you can. Hold for ten to 15 seconds, then release and repeat. Start with ten and work up to 15 reps, three times a day.

Don't forget to accessorize. Try SkinnyMe Bangles (\$35 per pair, [skinnymefashion.com](http://skinnymefashion.com)), half-pound weights that look like trendy bracelets. Any time you lift your arm, you're lifting a little extra weight to burn extra calories. Tone while drinking water, shopping or surfing the Web.

## WORK IT AT WORK

Brown recommends these subtle moves that tighten and tone while you're multitasking on the job.

### •Be outstanding.

Slowly stand up while tightly squeezing your butt muscles. Once erect, unclench your bum and slowly return to your seat. Repeat ten times, three to four times a day. "These are great for firming and toning your legs and butt," says Brown.

### •Get a (calf) raise.

Score shapely lower legs while seated by slipping off your shoes and placing your feet flat on the floor, with legs bent at the knees about 90 degrees. Slowly raise your heels off the floor, keeping your toes on the floor. Hold for one to two seconds, then slowly return your heels to the floor to the starting position. Repeat this for up to 30 seconds, three to four times a day.

## RETRAIN YOUR SWEET TOOTH

Nothing can take your figure from hourglass to jug quicker

than a habit of consuming sugary candy, soda or lattes. Learning to satisfy sugar cravings with healthier options helped New Jersey weight loss blogger Aliah Davis-McHenry lose 40 pounds. "I live for frozen grapes," says Davis-McHenry. "I eat a large bunch, about 25 to 30, whenever I get a craving for something sweet or need a snack. They let me get my snack on without packing on the weight." One cup of grapes is about 62 calories. It's heart-healthy too, boasting zero milligrams of cholesterol. For variety, toss in some frozen blueberries and raspberries.

According to Magdalena Cadet, M.D., director of rheumatology at New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System, breakfast cereal is a go-to craving killer. "Instead of ice cream, I look to a bowl of honey roasted nut cereal with skim or 2 percent milk," she says. "Another option is using soy milk, which contains omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants that can benefit brain and heart health."

## KEEP IT MOVING AT THE GROCERY STORE

A trip to the grocery store after work is not just a place to pick up dinner or stock up for the week, says Denita Clara Clark, fitness competitor and professional NFL cheerleader with the Atlanta Falcons. "The grocery store is a busy woman's aerobic playground."

Next time you're shopping, Clark suggests you try these tricks to sculpt your assets:

- Push the cart around while doing straight-leg kickbacks by keeping your leg straight and squeezing your butt

muscles while kicking your leg behind you. Alternate legs as you walk down the aisle to strengthen and shape your butt and thighs.

- When reaching for something on a lower shelf, do a squat. "Keep your feet about shoulder width apart and lower your butt while bending your knees," says Clark. "Hold the position for three to five seconds before rising back up."

- Use heavy items to your advantage: Do a quick set of biceps curls before putting grocery bags in your trunk

physical and emotional energy," says Griffin.

"My iPhone keeps me up-to-date with work and in touch with friends and family, but to clear out my mental cobwebs and recharge my spirit, once a week I take a digital holiday for an evening," says Kimberlyn Leary, Ph.D., a psychoanalyst and chief psychologist at the Cambridge Health Alliance and associate professor at Harvard Medical School. "At first I missed the ping of incoming messages, but being

TO GIVE YOUR ARMS A WORKOUT, DO A QUICK SET OF BICEPS CURLS BEFORE PUTTING GROCERY BAGS IN YOUR TRUNK OR ON THE COUNTER.

or on the counter. "Curl your arms straight up as close to your shoulder as possible to strengthen and tone your arms," says Clark.

## CLEAR OUT MENTAL CLUTTER

While you're improving your outer beauty, don't forget to do some inner work. Strength from within provides you with the power to be true to yourself and helps you get through tough days or make the most of opportunities and challenges, says Teresa Moore Griffin, a personal growth expert, executive coach and author of *LIES That Limit* (SoulWorks). It also gives you the confidence to show you're sexy, sassy and savvy. "To find your inner strength, you need to clear out stuck, stale and stagnant

untethered creates space for me to think, dream and recharge my creative juices."

## CHOW DOWN TO POWER DOWN

It's not called beauty rest for nothing. Walking around with undereye circles and bags from lack of proper rest is not a good look. By now we've all heard about the importance of sleep to good health, but did you know that what you eat for dinner can influence how well you sleep during the night? "Foods that are known to improve slumber include bananas, chickpeas and salmon," says Cadet. "They enhance vitamin B6 levels in the body, which is needed for melatonin, the body's natural sleep hormone." Foods rich in calcium like low-fat yogurt and kale may also play a role in improving sleep.