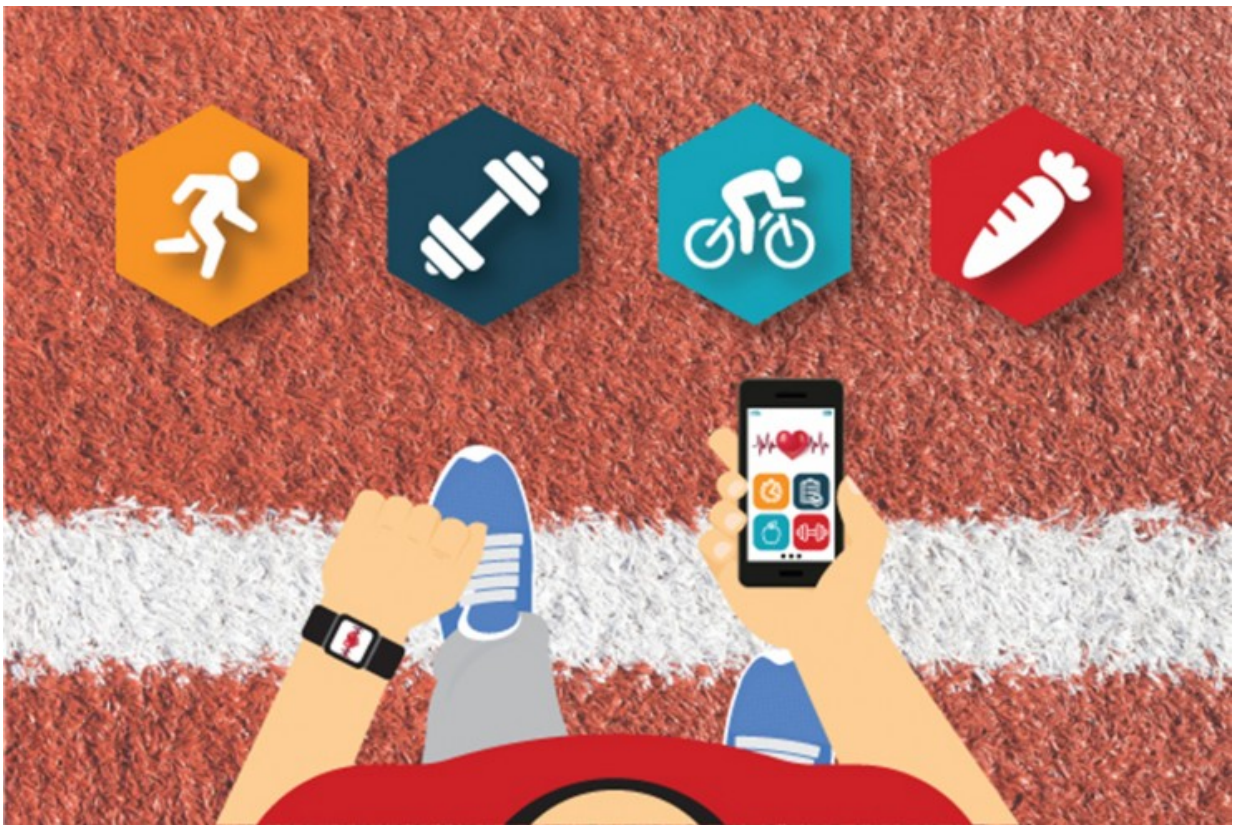


Want to get fit in 2016? Then follow these workout tips

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Schedule a specific time to workout, says Sarah Gaines, the founder of Fit University, and don't skip the training session. "You don't cancel your doctor's appointment, so don't cancel your gym appointment either." Illustration by Luis Delgado/Northeastern University.

Last week, we polled the Northeastern University community, asking

students, faculty, and staff to vote for their top New Years resolutions. Once the responses started to roll in, we got to work, enlisting experts to share tips for sticking to the top five resolutions as voted on by you.

The plurality of voters picked "getting in shape, staying fit, and losing weight," a topic about which Sarah Gaines knows a thing or two. Gaines, AMD'15, is the founder of Fit University, the [college student](#)'s go-to source for all things health and fitness. Here, she offers up five tips for building a fitter physique in 2016.

Start slowly

The uninitiated lifter should start out slowly, according to Gaines, hitting the gym once or twice a week. "You can't just go from 0 to 100," she explains. "The only way to make sustainable changes is to make changes gradually."

Schedule a specific time to workout, she says, and don't skip the training session. "You don't cancel your doctor's appointment, so don't cancel your gym appointment either."

Eat smartly

If you want to lose weight, focus on eating lean protein, like chicken, turkey, and egg whites, Gaines says. If you want to bulk up, fill your plate with complex carbohydrates, like brown rice and sweet potatoes.

"If you're really serious about it, I suggest talking to a nutritionist who can tailor a plan specifically for you," she says. "The reality is that it's hard to figure it out on your own."

Gaines, for her part, eats five small meals per day, all of which include

protein and veggies. "Vegetables are filled with fiber," she says, "and help to keep you full."

Try a health and wellness app

One of Gaines' favorite health apps is My Macros+, which bills itself as "the complete diet tracking solution." On the fitness side, she likes Nike+ Training Club, which allows users to choose between 100 different workouts and seek motivation from their friends when they're grinding through difficult routines.

She frequently uses a yoga app too. "When I think of fitness, I also think of mental health," she says. "The cool thing about yoga is that it teaches you techniques to relax while also keeping you flexible and limber."

Find what works for you

"Always try new things," Gaines says. "Going to the gym is not the only way to get in shape." Take a class, join Northeastern's Fit University chapter, or sign up for one of the university's more than 40 club sports. "Find what you like," she says, "because you're only going to do what you really want to do."

Set goals—and reward yourself for reaching them

Break down your long-term goals into smaller, more easily achievable short-term goals, Gaines says. And when you reach them, reward yourself with something that makes you feel good. For her, that's a new piece of workout gear.

"It's important to look at fitness and health not as a chore you dread but as something you look forward to," she says. "Once you start seeing the

benefits it has on your life, it will become a natural part of your routine."

Provided by Northeastern University

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