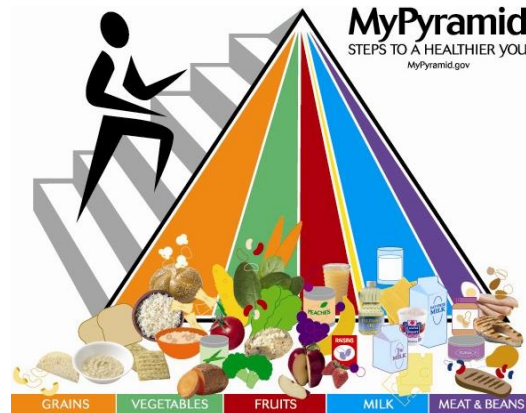


Tips for Weight Management

“Choose a goal that you truly want for yourself and not one dictated by family, friends and society.”



STEP 1: Making a Resolution

Whether or not you keep your resolution all depends on what your resolution is. You don't need to aim low, but the rules of time, space and physical reality should come into play. Don't expect to scale Everest by May if you haven't been off the couch in a decade.

Make One Resolution: Dr. Richard Wiseman of Hertfordshire University recommends that you make only one resolution. Your chances of success increase if you focus your attention on one issue at hand.

Choose a Goal That's Important to You:

Without a strong, internal motivation, your resolution is meaningless. Choose a goal that you truly want for yourself and not one dictated by family, friends and society.

Be realistic: Don't set yourself up to fail by setting an unrealistic goal. You're not going to earn a black belt

in a year if you haven't been physically active since the Nixon administration, but you can start attending martial arts classes on a regular basis.

Be Specific: Be specific about your goals is, in part, tied to being realistic. Break down a larger goal like "losing weight" into manageable, specific, baby steps. Losing 1-2 pounds a week until you reach a goal weight set by a doctor is a healthier

and more achievable goal than committing to losing 50 pounds without any kind of plan in place.

Avoid Previous Resolutions: Dr. Wiseman recommends not using resolutions you've made and failed to stick with in the past. If you want to fall back on an old resolution, come at it at a different angle. If you resolved and failed to "lose 50 pounds," commit to starting a regular fitness regimen or eating more healthfully instead.

"Don't expect to scale Everest by May if you haven't been off the couch yet."

Don't Wait Until the Last Minute: A study conducted by the University of Washington found that most resolutions lead to failure when they were made at the last minute. Your resolutions require a sober-headed plan, not one fueled by the emotion of the New Year.

Don't Use Absolutes: Another finding of the study conducted by the University of Washington was that resolutions fail when they are framed as "I will never do X again." Absolutes aren't helpful; they are recipes for failure and disappointment. It's

better to make a commitment to a smoking cessation program with practical steps than it is to say, "I will never smoke again."

STEP 2: Make a Plan

Now that you've got your shiny, New Year's resolution all picked out, it is time to make a plan. Having a detailed road map is the key to making a resolution stick past the third day.

Set Short-Term Goals: You didn't think your one, big resolution was it, did you? You've got to break down your larger goals into smaller, achievable goals with measureable results. This is the best way to keep yourself motivated and on target. Give yourself check-in dates on the calendar, and reward yourself when you reach your sub goals. If your New Year's resolution involves a weight loss plan or fitness plan regimen, ask your doctor for help in creating your personal road map.

Plan for Obstacles: What might cause you to veer from your plan? Work-related stress? Family tensions? When something does happen, be ready for it. Think about what's most likely to trip your plan up. Try to avoid those situations or brainstorm healthy ways to cope with them.

STEP 3: Write It Down

Writing down your resolution and plan of attack is a powerful motivator. The act of writing prevents you from leaving your resolution too vague and forces you to commit to your resolution by externalizing it. You're essentially creating a contract with yourself. Here's what that contract should include:

Long-Term Goal and Short-Term Goals: Write down your overarching resolution and the manageable chunks you've broken it into. Use action verbs.

Measurable Outcomes and Completion

Dates: Assign a date to your sub-goals. Create a system for reminding yourself to check-in by using an online or hard copy calendar.

List of Obstacles: Write down which obstacles you might encounter and how you plan on avoiding or dealing with them.

Benefits of Achieving Your Goal: Know exactly what you will gain for achieving each goal.

Write Yourself a Letter!

Another approach to both ritualizing your New Year's promises and enlisting the help of others is by creating a New Year's letter. Write a letter to the "future you" of one year from now. Visualize yourself as having successfully achieved your goals. Exchange your letter with a friend or loved one, who also creates a letter. When next New Year's Eve rolls around, you can read your letters together.

"Having a detailed road map is the key to making a resolution stick past the third day."

STEP 4: Enlist Support

Increase your chance for success by enlisting the help of others. Creating change in your life is much easier when you've got backup.

Tell Everyone: Letting people know about the changes you're making in your life means that you've got a whole team checking in on your progress and cheering you all the way.

Get a Buddy: Find a friend or family member with a goal similar to your own. Keep yourself motivated by quitting smoking, going to the gym or taking meals together.

Look for a Role Model: Find a role model who has achieved the goals you're trying to reach. Look to that person for inspiration and advice.

Join an Online Community: Particularly if your goals are fitness or weight loss related, you can find support through online communities like diet TV or trainee.

Put Money on the Line: Some people like a more practical motivator. Write a sizeable check to

a friend or family member that can be cashed if you don't meet your goals.

STEP 5: Take Action

Dr. Hinda Dubin of the University of Maryland-School of Medicine offers some enlightening advice about motivation and goal-keeping, "Action precedes motivation, not the other way around. People often think that they should wait until they are motivated to start doing something good for themselves, but it doesn't work that way."

Dr. Dubin recommends not waiting for inspiration, but acting. It doesn't need to be big but you need to start. Inspiration will follow.

Do Something: like Dr. Dubin says, "Once you initiate an action – the smallest of actions – you pick up momentum." It's easier to stick with something once you realize that's it's not so hard.

Visualize: Visualize yourself achieving your goal. Better yet, make that visualization as real as possible. *Psychology Today* recommends clipping pictures out of magazines that represent your goal and hanging them where you can see them everyday.

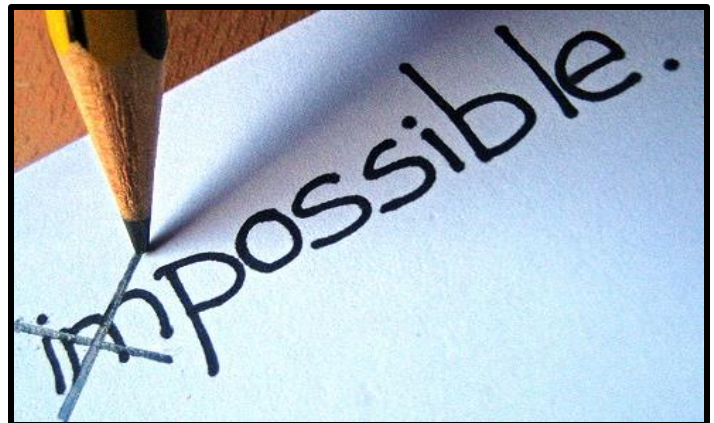
Act the Part: If you're training for a marathon but don't think of yourself as a marathoner, start. Invest in a good pair of shoes. Talk about your training. In essence, fake it until you make it.

Track Your Progress: Much like writing your goals down, tracking your new progress is a powerful motivator. The University of Washington study on New Year's resolutions reported that the more monitoring you do and feedback you get, the more likely you'll be to stick with your resolution.

Reward Yourself: Celebrate your little successes along the way. Your rewards don't need to be extravagant, and they certainly shouldn't interfere with your goals. But, rewarding yourself is an important part of keeping yourself motivated.

Be flexible: Perfectionism won't help you achieve your goals. Think of setbacks as opportunities for growth. After all, nobody goes straight from point A to point B. They set a course, take periodic readings and make adjustments along the way. Stay positive, and you'll be well on your way to making a New Year's resolution that lasts all year round.

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