



RESOLUTIONS THAT REALLY WORK

Be specific and realistic

The start of a new year is a great time to make plans to change for the better. But be careful not to set yourself up for a fall with unrealistic resolutions. Is it really possible for you to run a marathon in March? Or be fluent in Spanish for your June vacation? Here are suggestions to help you reach your goals.

- › **Be realistic.** Don't expect too much too soon – set realistic goals with realistic time frames. If you want to lose weight, make small changes one at a time. Why not start by cutting out one or both of your snacks between meals, and see if you lose weight?
- › **Be specific.** Instead of telling yourself, “I am going to get fit,” say “I will go for a 30-minute brisk walk after lunch three days a week.” You're more likely to do it if you're specific. It helps to make a list of your goals and stick it in a place where you will see it often, like on the refrigerator.
- › **Create an action plan.** Think about how you're going to reach each goal and how it will fit into your daily routine. If your evenings are packed with kids' activities and errands, make time for exercise during your lunch break or before work.
- › **Reward yourself.** All hard work deserves a reward, and it can motivate you to succeed. For example, if you meet your goal of going to the gym three days a week, treat yourself to a massage or a new pair of walking shoes.
- › **Remain flexible.** It's okay to change your resolutions – especially if something's not working. Don't be afraid to revise your goal or explore different ways to reach it.
- › **Think “year round.”** Nothing big gets done in one day and resolutions are no exception. Try to make one major goal, then break it into small steps to help you reach that goal. For example, if your goal is to eat more fruit and vegetables, your first objective may be to replace your afternoon snack with a piece of fruit.

Together, all the way.®



Cut back and move ahead.

Do you feel like you've overloaded your body with rich food and drink over the holidays? Are you running on too much stress and not enough energy? Cutting back on what's slowing you down could be just what you need to kick-start the new year.

SALT Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure, which can cause increased risk of heart disease and stroke. Stick to less than 2,300 mg of sodium (salt) per day. If you need to lower your blood pressure, have no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day.¹ With so much salt hidden in many foods it can be hard to know exactly how much you are taking in.

Cutting down on salt

- › Stop adding it to your food. Try using herbs, spices, garlic, pepper or chilies for flavor.
- › Watch for hidden salt that comes from processed foods (crackers, breakfast cereals, soups, sauces and ready-made meals) and fast foods.
- › Read food labels and choose brands with lower salt content (remember, it is often listed as sodium).

SUGAR Too much sugar can lead to weight gain and obesity because your body converts sugar that's not needed into fat. Less added sugar in your diet may help reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Limit added sugars to less than 10% of your calories per day.¹

Cutting down on sugar

- › Limit your intake of sweets, and choose things like 100% whole-grain baked goods and fruit instead, which release their sugar more slowly into your bloodstream.
- › If you have sugar in your tea or coffee, try to use less bit by bit.
- › "Low fat" can often mean "high sugar," so read labels carefully. Sugar is often hidden in savory foods such as pizza and ready-made meals.

SODA Soda may be the first thing to give up when you need to reduce calories, sugar or caffeine.

Cutting down on soda

- › Skim milk is a great way to get more protein, calcium, vitamin D and other important nutrients. One cup of skim milk has about 85 calories.
- › Water can seem a little unexciting, but you can add non-caloric flavorings to your water, such as a sprig of mint, slices of lemon, cucumber or a frozen strawberry. Or try sparkling water to add some bubbles.
- › Tea is another healthy option for people who prefer flavored drinks. Tea is calorie free and contains antioxidants that are great for your health.

STRESS Managing stress is all about taking charge of your life — everything from thoughts and emotions to the way you deal with problems. The goal is a balanced life with time for work, relationships, relaxation and fun.

Cutting down on stress

- › Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. Plan ahead and make sure you don't spread yourself too thin.
- › When stress is getting you down, take a moment to think about all the things you're thankful for, including your own positive qualities and gifts.
- › Many things in life are beyond our control. Focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.
- › Know your limits. Stick to them and refuse to take on anything more when you're close to reaching them.



Source:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. "2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans" 8th Edition. December 2015. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015> (accessed August 8, 2016)

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