

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



Ah, the holidays - the time of year when we run here and there chasing expectations we are unlikely to fulfill while spending more money than we anticipated. As we fail to accomplish the many items on our holiday to-do list, we feel a sense of disappointment. And on the heels of that disappointment we arrive at New Year's - traditionally a time to take stock and resolve to do better, be kinder, lose weight, etc. The timing is ironic as the weeks following the holidays find many of us at our lowest energy point in the year.

Many of our resolutions hang over from year to year. We consider it a good year when we have managed to keep a resolution for a few weeks or a few months. Many of us are frustrated with the process. Some even call these resolutions New Year's Dissolutions.

Perhaps our first New Year's resolution should be [to wait and make our New Year's resolutions in March or not at all](#) - why set ourselves up for failure?

But Making Resolutions Can Be Positive

Resolutions allow us to reassess our priorities and the directions we are taking. As part of the process, we can reassess and give credit where credit is due.

List all of the positive things you have accomplished last year, not just the negatives. Sometimes we just need a pat on the back.

The self-talk involved can be a pep talk.

- *Ask yourself - are you really willing to make the change?*
- *What sacrifices will you have to make?*
- *What happens if you do not make the changes?*
- *Do you already have too much happening?*
- *What are the benefits? Make a list.*

Some Suggestions To Help Make Your Resolutions More Achievable

Limit the number of resolutions and prioritize them.

Three to five resolutions do not seem as daunting as ten. Too many resolutions can make you feel inadequate and overwhelmed before you even start. A study by psychologists at the University of Washington found that most people (63%) keep the resolution they put at the top of their list for at least two months.

Do it for yourself.

If the resolutions are the same ones you have made previously, before trying again examine what obstacles blocked you on previous occasions.

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1. lose weight
2. exercise
3. drink more water
4. quit smoking
5. earlier to bed
6. drink less
7. pay off credit
- home mom

Write them down.

After you have thought about possible resolutions for a few days, write them down. Putting your resolutions into writing serves to increase your commitment.

Make your resolutions concrete.

State your goals in objective or behavioural terms. For example, instead of writing down *I will be nicer to my mother*, write down what you will do that will be nicer. What positive actions will you take? Research has shown that we can be more confident embarking on a new habit than breaking an old one. For example, *I will call my mother every week and make a point of visiting her monthly*.

Resolutions fail for a number of reasons- too lofty, not realistic,
or we not really committed to doing the work.
But most of the time, they fail because we do not have an action plan.

Keep your list handy.

Write your resolutions in your PDA or Daytimer or post them on your bathroom mirror where they can serve as a reminder. Include a list of the benefits you will achieve.

Seek the support of others.

Share your resolutions with family and friends. Not only will they applaud your efforts and challenge you to keep going, but also ensure that you stay realistic. You might want a friend to serve as a Check Buddy, someone with whom you can discuss how you are doing. Remember that there are support groups for many different goals. You can also sign up on a number of websites to get monthly resolution reminders and tips to help you succeed.

Treat yourself kindly.

Stay positive and try to counter negative thoughts with positive ones. For example, replace *I slipped today and will never make it* with *It has worked for two weeks and I will get back on track tomorrow*.

Start with the easiest one.

It is not necessary to start working on all your resolutions at once. Pick the easiest one - begin with the one with which you are most likely to be successful. After one month of doing well, start on the next one. Success with one resolution will make it easier to tackle the next.

One day at a time.

Resolutions do not need to be a commitment of the whole year. Plan for just three months. Chances are good that any changes in behavior that last for three months are on the way to becoming a habit.

Research has shown that only 40% of those who achieve their first resolution do soon the first try. The rest try over and over again, with 17% succeeding after more than six attempts.

Remember many small steps add up.

Many people attain their goals by starting with small changes. With success comes more small changes or even, with the gained confidence, slightly larger changes. Most of our bad habits did not develop overnight but resulted from an accumulation of small things. Good habits can also result from small changes.



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