

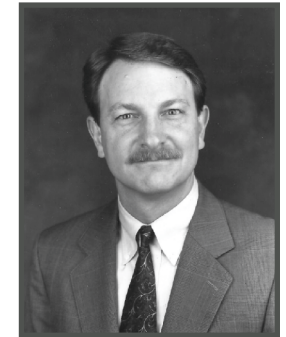
# Top Ten Ways To Make and Keep Your New Year's Resolutions

Every year on January 1, millions of Americans announce their dutiful list of Unrealistic New Year's Resolutions. And every year around my birthday January 3, millions of Americans tell each other, "Hey, who needs this resolution stuff? I work hard for a living and deserve to have an unhealthy lifestyle."

OK, some of us make it a whole week before crashing off the coast of good intentions. So what can we do to succeed this year? Here are ten ways to make and keep your New Year's Resolutions:

1. Start with your strengths. Give yourself credit for the things you already do well, like about yourself, and don't want to change. This affirmation list will help you keep perspective when the going gets tough.
2. Set specific goals. Select several areas you want to improve and write down specific changes. If you want to relax, exercise more, eat better, or spend time with people you enjoy, take the next step and specify when you will relax, where you will exercise, what you will eat, and who you will call to visit.
3. Build in variety. There are many ways to reach your goals. Consider a fitness plan that involves meditation on Monday, walking on Wednesday, and either swimming or stretching on Saturday. Alternate running with biking or skiing. Cross-training is a great way to beat boredom and adjust to fluctuating winter weather conditions.
4. Let go of the past. Don't beat yourself up with an old failure. Focus on the future. Take one step toward your goal today and then another tomorrow. Consult with your doctor as needed, but move forward.
5. Seek social support. Solitude can be great, but sometimes we need others to guide us and help us stay motivated. Check out a support group, go to AA, join a fitness club, take a yoga class, see a therapist, attend a wellness seminar, workout with a personal trainer, or contact a registered dietitian.
6. Focus on the positive. Changing an old habit can be difficult, so accept the hard work and keep your eyes on the prize. Remember: "Discipline is doing what you don't want to do so you can do what you want to do."
7. Avoid perfectionism. If you set unrealistic goals, you will be perfectly miserable. Allow yourself to be human. If you want to lose weight, don't declare a ban on all ice cream or eating anything after 9 pm. Give yourself a small portion on special occasions or eat a bowl of cereal for your late-night snack.
8. Celebrate often. Reward your efforts with a fun activity after small accomplishments. Enjoy the view at Blue Marsh Lake after a run, relax with your favorite novel after studying, get kisses from your kids each day without smoking.
9. Keep your sense of humor. Work hard, but don't sabotage your happiness or friendships by taking yourself too seriously. Make laughing a regular cardio exercise!
10. Revise and renew. Keep your resolution slips from becoming hopeless slides. Turn to the first date in each month of your new 2011 calendar and make the following notation: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Then re-read this article and adopt the attitude of Superbowl QB Drew Brees: "A setback is just a setup for a comeback."

You can do it!



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