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Setting New GOALS



start for your goals

You wouldn't take a trip without figuring out first how to get to your destination. When it comes to making healthy lifestyle changes, be SMART about creating goals. They should be specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time-specific.

Specific — Write down what you want to accomplish, and list what you need to do to get there. If you want to lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks, figure out what steps are needed.

Measurable — Think "I want to lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks" instead of "I want to lose weight in the next month."

Acceptable — Goals should challenge and motivate. Believe in yourself, and see yourself reaching your goals.

Realistic — Your goals must be real and attainable. Think short- and long-term. If you want to lose 50 pounds, break it up into shorter, realistic goals such as losing 1 pound a week by choosing more nutritional foods with fewer calories, decreasing portion sizes, and adding consistent exercise.

Time-specific — Goals need deadlines. For example, "I want to lose 30 pounds in 6 months," or "By this time next month, I want to be down 5 pounds."

Gear up for the new year

Now that you know the SMART process, what type of goals should you aim for?

Planning is straightforward when you focus on these key areas of your health:

- ✓ **Nutrition:** What small change could you make to improve what you eat and drink? Don't try to go too grand; be realistic. Maybe it's cutting back on caffeine or adding a piece of fruit to breakfast.
- ✓ **Movement:** How could you fit in at least 150 minutes a week? Take a look at your schedule and carve out a time or chunks of time that you'll devote to daily movement.
- ✓ **Emotional/mental health:** What stresses you? How could you make changes in what you do or think to reduce or eliminate that stress?
- ✓ **Finances:** What habits could you change to save some change? Think about daily vices. Could you downgrade the data plan on your smartphone or cut back on eating out?

Now that you've figured out your needs for 2018, what about your spouse or partner, and your children? What can you all do together to stay well? Get tips from *5 Family Goals for Wellness*, below.

5 Family Goals for Wellness

• **Keeping a family healthy takes time and commitment.** It's a tall order, ensuring that kids and parents alike achieve and maintain a positive lifestyle in a hectic world. Starting with goal-setting, make this a family event, prepare for it and make it fun. Invite everybody to start with 1 specific health goal. Keep the focus on wellness 5 ways:



2. **Active pursuits** — Children need at least 60 minutes of exercise every day, adults need 150 minutes per week, and you can all accumulate it in 10-minute increments. You can find the time; just unplug from electronics and head for the park.
3. **Safety always** — For example, use helmets during sports, insist on thorough handwashing, and stay aware of potential hazards, such as falling and burns. Make sure proper equipment is used before participating in team sports.
4. **Health screenings** — Track routine exams, pediatric visits, immunizations and dental checkups. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you ask about child health screenings for weight problems, unhealthy cholesterol and depression.
5. **Sharing life together** — When we take time to connect daily — working through everyday challenges, resolving conflicts, pursuing dreams, and facing the disappointments and joys of life as a family — we can build the resilience to counter stress and adversity as individuals.

1. **Lifelong good food habits** — Start each day with breakfast. Learn the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables and avoiding processed foods. Eat fast food only occasionally. Make dinner together.



If at **FIRST** you don't **SUCCEED**

So you've set your goals — now comes the hard part. Many of us start the year with the best of intentions, only to become discouraged and give up quickly.

The key is to keep trying — most changes in health behavior take several attempts before they stick. The following steps can increase your chances for success:

- ❶ **Ask for support** from family and friends.
- ❷ **Make a plan to support the behavior you want to change.** If you smoke after eating, take a walk instead; if you lack energy when you get home, take walking shoes to work and walk before you get home.
- ❸ **Consider formal help.** Get smoking cessation medication, sign up for a weight control program, join an aerobics class or a bicycle or walking club.
- ❹ **Learn from the experience of others.** Besides encouragement, online or in-person support groups can also provide strategies and tips. If you're struggling, chances are someone has been there before you.
- ❺ **Track your progress.** There's nothing as rewarding as looking at results as time passes.
- ❻ **Reward yourself.** Promise yourself something you enjoy when you succeed. Celebrate your accomplishments — even those that may not impress the uninformed — 1st day, 1st week, 1st month, etc.
- ❼ **Expect setbacks.** Forgive yourself and plan ahead for how to get back on track. Keep trying with your resolutions and use these tips to help you stay on the path to success.
- ❽ **As the year progresses, examine the past 3 to 12 months.** List any achievements or disappointments, and note what you want to maintain, improve or change across each category of your life.

