

Making Health Resolutions Permanent

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New Year's resolutions are a custom that people have attempted to practice for many years. It is a positive practice that leads people to envision what they might be if they could just stick to a plan of action (which usually equates to discipline) consistently over the coming year. All too often, the "sticking to it" part is the biggest challenge. Very often, people focus their resolutions on health. Whether prevention focused (quitting smoking, eating a balanced diet, working out, more sleep) or health promotion based, health resolutions are both useful and attainable. It just takes a sound action plan and the motivation to keep going, one day at a time.



Record Your Resolutions

The first step in creating a resolution plan is to record the outcomes that you desire to achieve this year. Write them down in order of priority. Do you want to achieve your ideal body weight? To develop a workable individualized fitness regime? To learn and practice sound nutrition? Achieve an active and healthy sex life? Stop smoking or drinking alcohol? Attune with nature more? Think about your own state of health, your lifestyle choices and current health patterns. What do you need to change to create a dynamic and healthy life for yourself?

Set Realistic Goals

Once you have recorded the outcomes you desire you can move onto step two - leveling your target goals into smaller steps. For instance if your goal is ideal body weight, you will need to focus on nutrition, fitness and your body image. The triangle of activity, proper diet and visualizing the body you were meant to have is the healthiest and most effective way to regulate your weight - whether you need to lose or gain weight to achieve it. So, you need to plan how to improve your diet; participate in routine physical activity and find time to focus on your own vision for your body. Take it one week at a time. Focus more on nutrition than on diets. If you work out consistently and eat a sound diet of all the five food groups, your weight will regulate itself. Especially, if you combine these practices with visualization and imagery focused on "seeing" yourself at your ideal body weight. Write down your goals for the week, keeping your ultimate target in mind. Be realistic and keep track of your progress.



Record Your Progress

Buy a book that you can record your progress in - a blank journal, a lined paper workbook, or create a binder with graph sheets and record fields for writing down each day's steps towards your goals. Writing it down gives you incentive to keep going - to enjoy the process of achieving your goals. If it is worth having, it will likely take diligence and a total dedication to incorporating healthy practices into your lifestyle. Try to see the steps you take as new patterns of behavior which help you to achieve your goals. In time, they will become a part of your daily life, they will feel natural and beneficial. Try not to see the healthy steps you take as denial or drudgery. Rather, see them as gifts to yourself - they are practices and activities that both empower and enliven you. They represent things you do to care for yourself and for the people you care for.



Involve Others in Your Quest

Taking care of your health is a great gift to your loved ones. It also offers opportunities to share quality time and positive activities with those you are close to. It helps tremendously to share your healthy activities with someone else. Learn about nutrition with your family or friends. Work out with a partner. Explore nature with them too. Quit smoking with a buddy. And keep a journal about it together, sharing your outer and inner progress. The encouragement and collaboration that can develop will help you to fortify your resolutions on an ongoing basis and help all involved move toward health in a friendly supportive atmosphere.



Health resolutions can be made and maintained. Many people joke that resolutions are made to be broken. If you do falter, don't worry about it. Pick up the process again tomorrow and don't worry about missing a day here or there. The key is to find health promoting activities that make you feel more alive and happy. If you enjoy your fitness routine, you are going to make a place for it in your life on a continual basis. Once you begin to see the benefits of sound nutrition, you aren't going to let yourself slip into a diet of convenience foods. The same goes for bad habits and stress inducing practices. If a healthy practice gives you more vitality and joy, you are going to develop a need for it. Your resolutions will become a natural part of daily living. So, if you haven't made them already, it's not too late. Write down your resolutions for this coming year and start planning. You'll never regret it!

Other Resources

Healthy Resolutions from BodyFitness at:

http://www.bodytrends.com/articles/weight_loss/healthyresolutionsgf.htm

Healthy New Year's Resolutions from Dr. Donnica.com at:

<http://www.drdonnica.com/display.asp?article=191>