Making “SMART” New Year’s Resolutions

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What's the Problem with Resolutions? Why Do So Many of Them Fail?

1. They are Made in Haste

   Instead of taking an hour or so to reflect, some people pause maybe half a second before announcing, "I'm going to run the Boston marathon!"
What's the Problem with Resolutions? Why Do So Many of Them Fail?

2. They Are Too Ambitious

• Be realistic.

• The New Year looks like a blank slate, but realize that you're the same person you were last year (which was just a few minutes/hours ago).

• Think about what's realistic for you and plan accordingly.

New Year Resolutions

1. Exercise think about 26 minutes a day
   week month

2. Lose 36 pounds by Christmas

3. Eat more vegetables

4. Watch less TV, movies, Forwarded pet

5. Back 36 minutes on Facebook a day

6. Go to church, potluck

7. Go to页ants and feast days more.

8. Keep the resolutions this year until
   Epiphany
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3. They Are Made Half-Heartedly

• Many of us make resolutions of one kind or another because somebody asks us, "So, what's your resolution?"
• Make a resolution when you want to, not when you're 'supposed' to.
• Make a resolution after deliberation, in moderation, and with full resolve.
What Type of Resolution Are You Making?

• Among the top new years resolutions are:
  1. Weight loss
  2. Exercise
  3. Smoking cessation
  4. Debt reduction

• After six months, only about half of resolution-makers are still on track to meet their goals.
What Type of Resolution Are You Making?

• Sometimes, our list of New Year's resolutions looks like a list of *chores*, things you "should" do, but do not particularly want to do.

• Consider a resolution that inspires you. Something you just want to do. *doing things that make life joyous and meaningful will promote your health and wellbeing.*
What is the Key to Success with Resolutions?

• People who kept their resolutions tended to have:
  1. Broken their goal into smaller steps
  2. Rewarded themselves when they achieved one of these
  3. Told their friends about their goals
  4. Focused on the benefits of success
  5. Kept a diary of their progress.
What is the Key to Success with Resolutions?

- People who planned a series of smaller goals had an average success rate of 35%, while those who followed all five of the above strategies had a 50% chance of success, the study found.
- The most successful techniques involve making a plan and helping yourself stick to it.
Choose a Specific, Realistic Goal

- Every year, millions of adults resolve to "lose weight" or "get in shape" during the next year.
- Instead of selecting such an ambiguous goal, focus on something more **concrete** that you can realistically set your sights on.
- Choosing a **concrete, achievable goal** also gives you the opportunity to plan exactly how you are going to achieve your goal over the course of the year.
HONEST JON

My wife challenged me to make new year's resolutions I can keep. So I'm determined and committed to becoming fatter, lazier and older this year...
Pick Just One Resolution

While you may have a long list of potential New Year's Resolutions, Richard Wiseman, a professor of psychology at Hertfordshire University, suggests that you should pick just one and focus your energies on it, rather than spreading yourself too thin among a number of different objectives.
Don't Wait Until The Last Minute

• Planning is an essential part of achieving any goal.
• Experts suggest that you should spend some time planning out how you will tackle a major behavior change.
• You can start by writing down your goal, making a list of things you might do to achieve that goal, and also noting any obstacles that might stand in your way.
Start With Small Steps

• Focus on taking tiny steps that will ultimately help you reach your larger goal.

• While it may seem like a slow start, these small changes make it easier to stick to your new habits and increase the likelihood of long-term success.
Avoid Repeating Past Failures

• If you choose to reach for the same goals you've tried for in the past, spend some time evaluating your past results.
• Which strategies were the most effective? Which were the least effective? What has prevented you from keeping your resolution in past years?
• By *changing your approach*, you will be more likely to see real results this year.
Identify and Address Barriers

• What might get in the way?
• What might help you to overcome that roadblock?
• List several solutions or ideas to overcome the obstacle.
Enhance Confidence Using a Problem-solving Approach

• How confident are you that you can reach the goal you set?" (Using a 0 – 10 scale with 0 not at all confident and 10 extremely confident)
• What makes you that confident?
• What would help you to be more confident?
• Who else might help you?
Remember That Change Is a Process

• Those unhealthy habits that you are trying to change probably took years to develop, so how can you expect to change them in just a matter or days, weeks or months?
• It may take longer than you would like to achieve your goals, but remember that this is not a race to the finish.
• Once you have made the commitment to changing a behavior, it is something that you will continue to work on for the rest of your life.
Don't Let Small Stumbles Bring You Down

- Encountering a setback is one of the most common reasons why people give up on their New Year's Resolutions. If you suddenly relapse into a bad habit, *don't view it as a failure*.

- Try keeping a resolution journal, write down important information about when the lapse occurred and what might have triggered it. By understanding the challenges you face, you will be better prepared to deal with them in the future.
Get Support from Your Friends and Family

• Yes, you've probably heard this advice a million times, but that is because the **buddy system actually works**. Having a **solid support system** can help you stay motivated. Explain what your goals are to your close friends or family and ask them to help you achieve your objectives.

• Enlist the help of others by joining a group that shares your goal.
Use “SMART” GOALS

• **S**pecific
• **M**easurable
• **A**ction-Oriented/Achievable
• **R**ealistic/Rewarding
• **T**ime-based/Trackable
Examples of SMART Goals for Physical Activity

• I will walk briskly for at least 15 minutes every day this week.

• I will take the stairs up the 3 flights to my office at least once each day that I am at work this week.

• I will do 20 minutes of lower extremity strengthening exercises 3 times this week.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Eat Wisely”

• I will add a green salad to my dinner meal two nights per week (or at lunch every day) for the next two weeks.
• I will include 2½ cups of a variety of fresh, canned, or frozen vegetables in my diet three times a week for the next two weeks.
• I will include 2 cups of a variety of fresh, canned or frozen fruit in my diet twice a week for the next month.
• Next week, I will not add any additional salt at the table when eating at home or in a restaurant.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Be Involved in Your Health Care”

- I will write down my questions about my blood pressure medicine before I go to my next clinic appointment next week, and keep it in my wallet so I don’t forget to take it along to the VA.
- This week I will find out from my health care team how to sign up for My HealtheVet.
- I will make a list of all my medications, what they are for, and when to take them over the weekend. I will take it with me to my next appointment.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Be Tobacco Free”

- I will call my doctor for nicotine patches and see if I can get the script filled today. My quit date will be the first of the month.
- I will gather all my lighters and ashtrays and throw them out, since this time I am quitting for good.
- I will tell my wife and my friends that I am quitting this weekend, so they can help me instead of offering me cigarettes.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Limit Alcohol”

• I am going to set myself a 2-drink limit for each day, starting today. Just 2, 12 ounce bottles of beer at the most.
• I’ll let my buddies know that I’d appreciate their support by not pushing me more after my 2 beers are done.
• After I drink my 2 beers, I will switch to non-alcohol beer.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Strive For a Health Weight”

• I will start using the Food Diary that I found on the MOVE! website and write down everything I eat, starting tomorrow.
• I will cut down on calories by switching to flavored water instead of soda, starting with this week’s grocery shopping.
• I will increase my exercise time to 30 minutes of walking the dog every evening, at least 5 times a week, starting tonight.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Get Recommended Screenings & Immunizations”

• I will follow-up on the colonoscopy recommendation and schedule it by the end of the week.
• I will get the flu shot at my next visit when they are available in the clinic.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Manage Stress”

• I have a music CD that always calms me down. I will listen to it at least once a day, either right after work or before bed, starting today.

• I will sign up today for that yoga class my wife has been raving about this week.

• I will take a walk when I get frustrated at work, at least around the building and around the neighborhood at lunchtime. My goal is to walk at least 4 times a week.
Examples of SMART Goals for “Be Safe”

• I will stop talking on the cell phone while driving, starting when I leave this building today.
• I will actually wear the helmet I bought for downhill skiing, starting with our trip this weekend.
• I will buckle my seat belt while the car is still in park, instead of waiting until I am driving, starting today.
“Whatever you choose to work on is OK. It’s YOUR choice.”

• Reflect on **Your** interests and values

• What is important to **YOU**? What do **YOU** want to accomplish or see realized in the next year?
Credits

• Kendra Cherry (2011), “How to Keep Your New Year's Resolutions - 10 Great Tips for Keeping Your Resolutions This Year”, Found Online at About.com Psychology Web Site (http://psychology.about.com/od/psychologytopics/tp/keep-your-new-years-resolutions.htm)


• The Guardian. Found online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2006/dec/29/psychology.uknews