

KEEP YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



Each year, Americans make countless New Year's Resolutions ... only to abandon them within a month or two. While resolutions are a great way to 'jump start' a new year, any resolution that leads to good health should be a small, realistic change that can be maintained throughout the year.

So, what's the secret to a successful resolution? While you can't wave a magic wand and make your resolution come true, here are some simple steps to make it easier:

- ❑ Be realistic by choosing an obtainable goal. Resolving to look like a super model is not realistic for the majority of us, but promising to eat fewer calories and include physical activity in our daily lives is very possible.
- ❑ Avoid choosing a resolution that you have not successfully achieved in past years. This can set you up for failure, frustration and disappointment. If you are still tempted to make a promise that you've made before, try altering it. Instead of declaring that you are going to lose 30 pounds, make losing a pound (or two) a week your new goal.
- ❑ Create a detailed game plan and be specific. All successful businesses start with a comprehensive plan that describes their mission and the specifics on how they will achieve it. Even if it seems obvious, write down your own personal plan and you'll be more likely to succeed as well.
- ❑ Break your one BIG resolution into smaller, less intimidating pieces throughout the year that will help you reach your ultimate goal. Even if you aren't able to reach your final goal, you will have many smaller - but still significant - achievements along the way. If your BIG goal is to speed walk three miles, your smaller goals could be (1) walking one mile in less than 20 minutes, (2) adding upper and lower body strength training to increase your muscular endurance and (3) walking two miles with a "personal best" speed that is faster than last year's time.
- ❑ Ask friends and family members for support. Be specific about the type of support you want, so it doesn't backfire and become more irritating than helpful. Some people like close supervision by being constantly reminded of their goals, while others prefer a periodic check-in at the end of every week (or month).
- ❑ Reward yourself with each milestone you reach. If you've stuck with your resolution for two months, treat yourself to something special but be careful how you do it. If you've lost 5 pounds, reward yourself to something non-food related, like a professional massage.
- ❑ Get professional assistance. Most people need help and sometimes a friend just isn't enough. Join a gym or a structured weight loss program, work with a personal fitness trainer or nutritionist, enroll in a smoking cessation class ... choose the support that will work for you.



MANALAPAN
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

