NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS: LET'S MAKE THEM WORK FOR US!

This year, I'm going to:

- Make at-home meals so my family spends more time together.
- Lose the extra weight that I gained from last year.
- Get more physical activity.
- Eat better.

Wow! That's a long list of goals! By setting New Year's goals, we focus our attention on parts of our lives that we want to improve. However, if we make goals that are too broad or not specific enough, we might be setting ourselves up for not reaching our goals. What to do?

Let's look at the goals listed above and try to break them down into smaller steps that will make it easier to meet and track the progress made to keep motivated.

- **Family meals.** Choose a reasonable number of times that your family can make meals at home. What would work for your family? Can you eat two dinners a week together? How about "I will make at-home breakfast on weekends" if that is more likely to work.
- **Weight loss.** Adding extra pounds doesn't just happen over the holidays. It will take some time to get rid of the extra weight. Set a realistic goal of losing one pound a month.
- **Physical activity.** Getting more physical activity will help to reduce the weight, too. Set goals on physical activity like "I will take a walk during lunch whenever the weather allows" or "I will bike with the kids two nights a week after dinner". Build activity plans as specific steps that you can accomplish. You can always increase your physical activity as you get into a routine and start to enjoy the benefits!
- **Eat better.** Look at the way that you and your family currently eat and find ways that you can improve. Do you drink soda? Drinking soda provides empty calories. Set a goal to reduce (or stop) the amount of soda you drink. You can also set a goal to eat fruits and vegetables every day. If you already eat fruits and vegetables, eat one more each day. Drink lower-fat milk and choose lean meats and poultry as often as possible.

For additional tips on how to make specific, realistic goals check out a previous blog post at http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/2013/12/new-year-new-you-how-to-set-attainable.html.

By making your goals specific, you will have a great chance of reaching them! Have a healthy New Year!
Most people in the United States eat much higher amounts of sodium than they should. Eating foods with too much sodium can lead to increased blood pressure, which can contribute to heart disease and the risk of stroke. Salt and sodium are not the same, yet both words are often used in place of each other. Ninety percent of the sodium consumed is in the form of salt.

More than 75% of the sodium Americans consume comes from processed, pre-packaged, and restaurant foods. Only a small amount comes from using the salt shaker, either added during home cooking (5%) or at the table (6%).

Where does sodium come from? The most popular foods that can add high levels of sodium include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Helpful Tips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breads and rolls</td>
<td>1 slice of bread can be 80 to 230 milligrams of sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold cuts and cured meats</td>
<td>1 serving, about 6 thin slices of deli meats can add as much as half of your daily recommended sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza</td>
<td>Limit cheese and add more veggies to your next slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>Sodium in poultry products will vary with the preparation method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soups</td>
<td>Check labels to find lower sodium varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwiches</td>
<td>Try a half sandwich with a side salad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much sodium should be consumed? According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010:

- Americans aged 2 years and older should consume less than 2300 milligrams of sodium per day.
- People aged 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or who have high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, should further reduce their sodium intake to 1500 milligrams per day.

Research has shown that over time, your taste buds can adjust to prefer less salt. How can you reduce the amount of sodium you consume?

- Compare nutrition facts labels on similar canned and packaged foods and choose the one with the lowest amount of sodium.
- Purchase fresh fruits and vegetable or canned products with no added sodium.
- Avoid or limit your use of canned and pre-packaged meat products.
- Rinse regular canned foods such as beans to help reduce the amount of salt.
Select frozen vegetables without added sauces.
When preparing food at home, season foods with fresh herbs and spices in place of salt.
Use "low sodium" or "no salt added" ingredients in recipes.
Whether eating at home or at a restaurant, select small portions to help limit how much salt you eat.
Request restaurant nutrition information to be available to make healthier, lower sodium choices.

For more information on how you can reduce the sodium in your diet, visit: [http://cdc.gov/salt](http://cdc.gov/salt)


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**WIN**

THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FUN

The cold weather and holiday treats can make us lose motivation for physical activity this time of the year! Stay active by making physical activity fun for the whole family. Why not start a fun physical activity challenge when the kids are home from school? Pick a new physical activity to do for each day of the week! Keep track on a chart at home. Here's an example of a chart to help track your child's progress!

![My Activity Tracker](chart.png)

Here are some fun ideas to get you started:

**Indoor activities**

- **Dance, Dance, Dance** -- Turn on music and have the kids dance to 3 or more of their favorite songs! You can also find some great children's dance videos on YouTube to get the kids moving.
- **Hot Lava** -- Set pillows up in a course around the house. The goal is to travel from pillow to pillow without touching the ground. This gets the kids jumping and moving! Have them make a story to go along with the game!
- **The Exercise Hat** -- Fill a hat with different activities like toe touches, jumping jacks, sit ups, push-ups and high jumps. Have the kids pick from the hat and do the activity as many times as they can.
- **Make a Yoga Routine** -- Watch kids yoga videos with your child. Teach them 3-4 moves and then have them make their own sequence. Listen to relaxing music to set the mood.
- **Indoor Bowling** -- Use plastic cups or empty water bottles to set up an indoor bowling alley. Let kids roll a bouncy ball and knock over the cups. Then see how quickly they can clean up and reset the alley!
- **Indoor Hopscotch** -- Use masking tape to set up an indoor hopscotch course. Use a bean bag to toss and hop to the square you land on. Be a good role model and play along with the kids!
Outdoor Activities

- **Ride Bikes** -- Bundle up with scarves and gloves and take the bikes out for a spin.
- **Have an Outdoor Scavenger Hunt** -- Make a list of 10 things that you may see during a walk. Try a new path or a new course and have the kids check items off the list that they see or find.
- **Play in the Snow** -- If it's snowing let the kids have a shoveling contest and see who can build the largest pile of snow. Making snow angels and snow men count too!

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**FRUIT SALAD WITH JICAMA**

Fruit salad makes the perfect addition to a late-summer barbeque. The sweet, juicy flavors of fresh fruit can be eaten as a side dish, a dessert, and even part of breakfast in the morning. Creating fruit salad in the kitchen is a great way to let kids try new fruits.

Try a tropical fruit salad with jicama, mango, kiwi, papaya, and watermelon. Some of these fruits may not be familiar to your children. Let your child help prepare them in the kitchen and they are more likely to give the new fruits a try. Let your child help wash and mix the fruit together, checking out the different textures and smells.

**Fruit Salad with Jicama**

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 1 jicama, washed and sliced in thin strips
- 2 cups watermelon or cantaloupe, cut in cubes
- 1 mango, washed, peeled and cut in cubes
- 1 papaya, washed, peeled and seeded, cut in cubes
- 1 kiwi, washed, peeled and cut in cubes
- 1/2 lime, juiced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder

Directions:

Add fruit to large bowl.

1. Sprinkle the lime juice over the fruit.
2. In a small bowl, mix the salt and chili powder. Sprinkle mixture over fruit.
3. Chill in the refrigerator before serving.

SPICY APPLE-FILLED SQUASH

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 acorn squash, washed
1 apple, washed, cut in half, cored, and chopped
2 teaspoons margarine, melted
2 teaspoons brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
Dash of nutmeg, optional
Dash of ground cloves, optional
Cooking oil spray

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Spray a 1-quart baking dish with cooking oil spray.
3. Cut squash in half. Remove squash seeds from each half with a spoon.
4. Place squash (skin side up) in baking dish, cover with foil and put baking dish in oven for 30 minutes.
5. In a medium bowl, add apple, margarine, brown sugar, and spices.
6. Remove squash from oven. Flip squash over, and fill with apple mixture.
7. Re-cover squash with foil, and bake 30 minutes more.

Try serving this recipe with whole grains like brown rice or barley.


WINTER/SPRING: SUPER BOWL PARTY TIME-FOOD SAFETY

The hunt for the 49th Super Bowl Champion is in full action, and the Ravens may shock the world on February 1st! Even if they don’t make it, getting together with friends and family and watching the game can be fun. Food safety plays just as an important role as the commercials. For a home field advantage...

COOK- Your Meat

- Buy and use a food thermometer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meat Type</th>
<th>Internal Temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb</td>
<td>145°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steaks, Roasts, &amp; Chops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>145°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef, Veal, Lamb Ground</td>
<td>160°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg Dishes</td>
<td>160°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey, Chicken &amp; Duck Whole</td>
<td>165°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole, Pieces &amp; Ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEPARATE

- Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood separate from ready-to-eat foods, such as vegetables, fruit, and sandwiches when preparing, serving, and storing food.
CLEAN-Prevent simple food safety penalties

- Wash hands, kitchen surfaces, cutting boards, and utensils to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria. Imagine your guest using the remote to switch between the game and puppy bowl after going to the bathroom…Wash your hands after touching the puppy too!

CHILL

- Refrigerators should be set to maintain a temperature of 40°F or below.

- You may want a separate cooler filled with ice to keep any game day beverages cold instead of opening and closing your fridge throughout the game.

- Follow the 2 hour rule! Food left out for 2 hours or more are at a greater risk of causing foodborne illness.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP A CLEAN GAME?

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

COLD Food Game Plan: A cold food such as a bowl of salsa should be kept it in a small bowl to replace often, or keep a bowl of salsa nested in a serving dish filled with ice so the food temperature stays at a safe 40°F or below.

HOT Food Game Plan: A hot food such as meatballs and gravy you may keep hot using chafing dishes, a slow cooker, and/or warming tray. Use a food thermometer to make sure the food temperature stays at a safe 140°F or above.
Winter is in full force. As the days get shorter and the nights get colder, even the best of us can get a little down. The "winter blues" are characterized by the mild depression, lack of motivation, and low energy that many people experience during this cold season. Luckily, there’s a lot you can do to both prevent the blues from coming on and get yourself back to normal if they’re already here.

1. Exercise
As if we needed another reason to get fit! Exercise isn’t only for maintaining your weight and staying healthy. It’s great for relieving the stresses of life. Plus, the effects of a good workout can last for several hours after you hit the showers. You’ll have more energy throughout the day, and your metabolism with stay elevated, too. Exercise also helps your mind by releasing those "feel good chemicals" that improve your mood.

2. Eat a Healthy Diet
What and when you eat has a great effect on your mood and energy. Avoid refined and processed foods (like white breads, rice, and sugar). These foods are not only devoid of the nutrients your body craves, but they zap your energy levels and can affect your mood. Try to incorporate more complex carbohydrates (whole wheat breads, brown rice veggies, and fruit) and get your daily 8 cups of water. These healthy foods provide your body (and mind) with nutrients, and stabilize your blood sugar and your energy levels.

3. Get Some Sun
Most people know that sunlight provides us with Vitamin D. But did you know that it also improves your mood? Lack of sunlight can cause many people to become depressed—without knowing why! Try to spend a little more time outdoors. Keep your shades up during the day to let more light in. Sit near windows in restaurants and during class. Try changing the light bulbs in your house to "full spectrum" bulbs. These mimic natural light and actually have the same effects on your mind as the real thing.

4. Act on your Resolutions
Women who exhibited healthy behaviors (like exercising, not smoking, etc.) had less sad and depressed days than those whose behaviors were less than healthy. Although researchers studied women, the results are likely similar in men.

5. Avoid Binge Drinking
Staying in with a cold beer or a nice glass of wine may seem like the only thing to do in the winter months, and many people who feel down also tend to turn to alcohol when they’re feeling down. But alcohol is actually a depressant, and rather than improving your mood, it only makes it worse. Moderate drinking is fine for most people, but binge drinking (defined as having 5 or more drinks in one sitting) is never a healthy choice.

6. Treat Yourself
Having something to look forward to can keep anyone motivated. Winter seems endless! But if you plan something exciting, your mood improves when you’re anticipating it and when the event actually comes.

7. Relax!
You’re busy! Work, class, family, friends, appointments, meetings—even if you enjoy being busy, everyone needs some time off. Don’t be afraid to say "No" to extra opportunities (covering a shift for a co-worker, bringing food to your son’s class party). Try to spend a few minutes each day doing nothing! Read a book or magazine, sleep in on the weekend, go to bed early, try some meditations, or take a yoga class.

8. Embrace the Season
Instead of always avoiding the cold and the snow—look for the best that it has to offer! Take up a winter sport like ice skating, snowboarding, hockey, or even sledding! Enjoy these opportunities while they last—after all, they’re only here a few months per year.

9. Get Social Support
Don’t underestimate the power of friends, family, mentors, co-workers, and neighbors. Who can you turn to when you’re down and need a pick-me-up? Keep a mental list of these special people and don’t be afraid to ask for help or encouragement when you need it. Something as simple as a phone call, a chat over coffee, or a nice email or letter can brighten your mood.
10. Catch some Zzzz’s
People naturally want to sleep a little bit more during the winter. But with all we have going on, sometimes sleep is the first thing to go. Aim for 7-8 hours each night, and try to keep your bedtime and waking time consistent. Try not to oversleep—those 12-hour snoozes on the weekend can actually make you MORE tired. Don’t forget naps! A short (10-30 minute) afternoon nap may be all you need to re-energize midday.

Adapted from http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/wellness_articles.asp?id=341

TOP 7 MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WITH TIME MANAGEMENT

- Working from your to do list! This might surprise you, but it's actually a big time management mistake many people make. Instead of working from your complete to-do list, it's crucial to set a top priority list with a maximum of six to eight items on the list. Set this priority list at the end of each day for the next day. You should work from this priority list, working on item one first until finished then move to item number two. Keep your to do list separate and complete items on this list when you have finished items on your priority list. Also, use your to do list as a way to remember what you MIGHT want to put on your priority list.

- Checking emails constantly throughout the day. The biggest problem with this is that it interrupts what you are working on. Every time you are interrupted, you lose momentum and focus. Instead, check your emails in 20-30 minute blocks one to three times per day.

- Becoming distracted by elements on your computer, for example email notifications that pop up when you get new emails.

- Multi-tasking - doing too many things at one time and half completing all of them. This is much less effective than doing one thing at a time and completing each item before moving to the next. Every time you change to another task you lose momentum and focus. Instead, focus in solid blocks of time from 50 minutes to two hours. Multi-tasking is okay for easy activities such as driving and listening to an educational audio program at the same time, but for anything that requires complex thought, you need to focus on one task at a time. The biggest problem is leaving many tasks incomplete. Multi-tasking is actually okay when you complete each item that you are working on then move to the next, but then that wouldn't really be "multi-tasking" if you complete each task!

- Working in an environment where you are prone to being interrupted by other people, phone calls etc. If other people come in and interrupt you constantly, this will be a big time waster. Your train of thought, momentum and flow are interrupted and you won't be able to focus on your priorities.

- Starting your day by checking your emails. This can be a huge distraction. Instead, start your day with the top priority on your daily priority list.

- Keeping emails in your inbox. If you keep emails in your inbox, you will likely read the same email five times before you action it. Your inbox is not meant to be your to do list. Instead, try to handle all emails when you read them. Either delete it, archive it, delegate it, action it quickly or if you can't finish the task at the time of reading the email, archive your email and put the action on your to do list. Keeping your inbox clear will also help you to keep your mind clearer and more focused.

If you have a disability that requires special assistance for your participation in a program, please contact the Carroll County Extension Office at 410-386-2760; fax 410-876-0132, two (2) weeks prior to the program.

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