

Five tips for a healthy new year

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So many people start the year by saying that they want to run a marathon or drop 25 pounds. Healthy New Year's resolutions like these are a positive step in the right direction. And, yet, some of us keep having to set similar goals each year as we end up giving up before we get through the month of January.

Make your goals SMART So how can we reach our goals this year? Make sure your goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-Bound.

Start with your overall goal, then break this down in to smaller benchmark goals. In six months, where do you want to be? Then break it down to even smaller steps, in six weeks where do you want to be and how will you know you're successful?

Set up a plan Consider what it will take every week to achieve your short-term goals. Is it getting physical activity four times a week? Try logging your food every day to make sure you stay on task. Simple adjustments such as laying out your clothes the night before or only allowing yourself to watch your favorite TV while on the treadmill. You'll be surprised at how even the small things will help keep you motivated. But, most importantly, write your plan down.

Schedule physical activity Just as you would normally schedule an appointment or a meeting, include physical activity in this calendar year of priorities. Schedule when you are going to get your movement in for the day and then keep that appointment. If you can't keep yourself healthy, eventually there won't be anything to offer anyone else.

Plan your meals Plan what you are going to eat for the week, even a day, it will help to keep your calories in check. Cook enough healthy food for dinner and be sure to have leftovers to take with you for lunch the next day. If cooking for yourself is too much of an obstacle then have healthy meals prepared for you.

Form a support team Every successful businessperson relies on their board of directors and employees for their expertise. Why shouldn't you? Pair up with a friend with similar goals or ask someone to ask about your fitness goals and progress every time they see you. The key is to surround yourself with support and knowledge. And if you don't know where to start or you've tried before and need that extra motivation, you can hire a personal trainer.

New fitness goals take some time before they become a habit. So be patient with yourself and before you know it you'll have turned your 2008 goals into the healthy accomplishments of 2009.

COMMENTARY



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