



## BONUS ARTICLE

### Want to keep your New Year's resolutions? Avoid these 5 mistakes

January 1 is the traditional day for resolving that this is the year you'll do it, whether "it" is losing weight, eating better, or exercising more.

Unfortunately, the determination to keep "it" up often falls by the wayside after a few months, or maybe even a few weeks. To make your resolutions stick, avoid these pitfalls:

#### MISTAKE #1

##### Going broad.

Deciding to lose some weight or exercise more is admirable, but when you don't define "some" and "more" you don't know how you're doing or where the finish line is.

Instead, set a specific goal. You might aim to:

- Exercise for a certain amount of time each day.
- Make a homemade meal twice a week.
- Fill half your plate with fruit and vegetables at lunchtime four times a week.

#### MISTAKE #2

##### Thinking too big.

A goal that's too lofty to be realistic is destined for failure. If your schedule is packed, exercising 60 minutes a day might not be possible.

Instead, pave the way with micro-goals and build on your success. You might try exercising twice a week for two weeks and then three times a week for three weeks. After you reach your micro-goal, see where you can go from there.

#### MISTAKE #3

##### Keeping it in mind

only. Rather than simply thinking about a goal,

write it down. This reminds you of what you want to accomplish and also lets you track your progress. You could write down your goal and then:

- Write down your daily exercise minutes or step count.
- Make exercise part of your to-do list and cross it off when you're finished.
- Track fruit and vegetable servings eaten each day.
- Place a checkmark on the calendar when you make a homemade meal.

#### MISTAKE #4

##### Being selfish.

Don't keep your goal to yourself. Let your family and friends know what you're looking to accomplish.



If you're looking to take a 20-minute walk three times a week, see if a friend would like to go with you. You're less likely to set your goal aside when you know someone else is counting on you, and walking with a friend brings encouragement and social support.

When you're aiming to make homemade, healthy meals, involve the whole family by divvying up the chores. Perhaps one person cooks, and others set the table and clean up.

#### MISTAKE #5

##### Failing to forgive.

Life happens, and even a carefully structured plan can easily be derailed. Rather than thinking about what you didn't do, think about what you can do to keep moving in a healthy direction.

If you overslept and missed your exercise class, maybe you still have time for a brief walk. Ask a friend to join you next time, so you're more likely to make it a priority to get up on time.

Don't despair if your healthy eating plan goes by the wayside one day. Think about how you can make healthier choices tomorrow and plan a meal to set yourself up for success.

There are bound to be bumps along the road to a healthier lifestyle. Learn from them, figure out how to avoid them, and move forward.

By not giving up on your goals you're making progress toward meeting them. ♦