



# Make this a Healthy New Year!

*It's that time of year again... 'New Year's Resolution' time! Unfortunately, research suggests that many people never seem to follow through with their resolutions. Check out these tips to help ensure success in meeting your goals:*

## Be SMART when Setting Goals....

The most popular New Year's Resolutions often focus on improving health. But, in order to achieve those goals, it is essential to spell out--in detail--exactly what needs to be done. For example, if the New Year's Resolution is to "get more exercise," what does that mean for you? How much exercise have you been getting? How much more do you want to get? What kind of activity do you want to do? When and where will you be exercising?



Experts say to set **SMART** goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and easy to Track:

- **Specific** goals clearly identify the action to be taken, such as "I will walk..."
- **Measurable** goals identify how much to do. They'll provide a way to be accountable so add numbers and time frames to your goals: "I will walk for 30 minutes a day..."
- **Achievable** goals identify actions that are possible for your situation. If you can't get to a gym, maybe "I will walk for 30 minutes a day over my lunch hour" is achievable for you.
- **Realistic** goals identify actions that are reasonable for your situation. If your job keeps you from walking at lunch every day, how many days can you expect to get away at noon?
- **Trackable** goals help you gauge your progress. Can you check off an accomplishment on your calendar just as you had planned?

## Other TIPS for Success:

Once you have set SMART goals, follow these simple tips to help ensure success:

- **Time management** – Don't let busy schedules keep you from following through. Remember, research shows that three 10-minute walks are just as beneficial as one 30-minute excursion.
- **Individualize your plan** – Pick an activity that you like to do. Choose a couple of activities and switch them up every now and then. This not only prevents boredom but also allows you to challenge your body in different ways.
- **Pace yourself** – Especially if you are just beginning to engage in physical activity, start slow and gradually increase your activity level as you gain stamina. Overdoing it increases your risk of injury and may cause burnout.
- **Support system** – Find a partner to join you. Knowing that someone else is counting on you helps increase the likelihood that you will follow through. (Hint: Your best partner for physical activity may be your dog! Dogs always want to go out to walk or play fetch, and they rarely call to say they have a conflict!)

**Source:** SMART Goals, <https://personal-finance.extension.org/what-are-smart-goals/>. This newsletter was peer-reviewed and updated in 2025. Check out more Family Fun on the Run articles:

<http://go.unl.edu/familyrun>