



## Secrets for Making Resolutions Stick

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By the end of January, most people who have made unrealistic New Year's resolutions will have burned out. But if you know the following secrets, those good intentions can stick forever. Good luck!

### 1. Make lifestyle changes because YOU want to.

Make changes for you, not your husband, wife, mother, or sister.

### 2. Make small changes and chart your progress.

The single biggest mistake people make is biting off more than they can chew—stopping smoking, losing 50 pounds in 2 weeks, and exercising every day. It's just too much. If you smoke, then according to the American Council on Science and Health, stopping is the single most important change you can make—in January, or whatever time of the year. Don't even worry about gaining a pound or two—it's nothing compared to the health benefits you'll gain by quitting smoking. If you want to lose weight, focus on losing 5 pounds at a time; changing lifestyle habits will get you to where you want to be for the long term. And that's what counts—not how much weight you lose in 2 weeks, but how much weight you can keep off for the rest of your life.

### 3. Keep a journal.

It allows you to track your progress so you can give yourself credit for the smallest accomplishments you make—they all add up. Journaling can also be used to document your emotions and help you see if there

are patterns to eating—do you eat when you're angry, bored, nervous? If so, then find alternative activities to get to the real problems.

### 4. Find a buddy.

Exercisers are more likely to stick to their plans when they know someone is waiting for or depending on them. If you prefer to exercise by yourself but find boredom is a problem, get a headset and listen to enjoyable music. The key to sticking with exercise is looking at it as fun. Find activities you enjoy, vary them, and schedule them into your calendar as you would any important appointment.

### 5. Practice positive self talk.

So often, we don't even realize that we are giving ourselves negative messages. Catch yourself and turn those statements around. Tell yourself that you enjoy getting up a few minutes early to exercise and that you feel great and look better when you exercise. If you catch yourself saying that your legs are too fat, STOP right there. and find something positive to say instead: I have a beautiful smile, I have attractive eyes, I look good in a particular color, etc. Assume you'll be successful, and you will be.