

Tips to jump-start your New Year's resolutions

December 29 2013



Expert advice on putting weight-loss, healthy-eating and exercise plans in motion.

(HealthDay)—Healthier eating, losing weight and getting more exercise are among the most common New Year's resolutions, and it's important to make a plan and be patient to achieve these goals, an expert says.

If you decide to start eating healthier, it can be difficult to decide where to start. It's best to focus on specific changes to make your goal more attainable, said Kelly Hogan, a clinical dietitian at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.

Here are some examples: Replace fried chicken or fish with baked or broiled versions two or three times a week; eat four or five servings of vegetables every weekday; and cook dinner at home three nights a week

instead of ordering carry-out food.

Instead of cutting out all your nightly desserts, plan to have one small dessert one or two nights per week. This will satisfy your sweet tooth and prevent intense cravings, Hogan said.

If you pledge to get more exercise, try to schedule workouts with a friend who has similar goals so you can hold each other accountable. You could also plan exercise in smaller increments throughout the day, Hogan said. For example, divide 30 minutes of [daily exercise](#) into three 10-minute sessions.

There are other easy ways to boost your physical-activity levels, Hogan said, such as getting off the subway a few stops early and walking the rest of the way.

If you vow to lose weight, you need to keep reminding yourself to be patient. People who lose weight gradually and steadily (1 or 2 pounds a week) are more successful at keeping the weight off, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

One good way to get started is to keep a food journal for a few days in order to get an idea of your eating habits and levels of food consumption, Hogan said. There are some good mobile apps to help you track calorie intake and [exercise](#), she said. If you can, work with a registered dietitian to develop a plan and help you achieve your weight-loss goals, Hogan said.

More information: The U.S. General Services Administration offers tips for sticking with [popular New Year's resolutions](#).

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Citation: Tips to jump-start your New Year's resolutions (2013, December 29) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-12-jump-start-year-resolutions.html>

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