



Getting Back to those Abandoned Resolutions

by Suzanne Swarengen

The beginning of the new year was a time of change for the many people wanting to break bad habits or start new good ones. Amount of exercise, diet and vices, such as smoking, are the most common things people resolve to change. Unfortunately, by the time spring arrives, many people have already fallen back to their old patterns. A few reasons for this are discouragement: not achieving quick results; scheduling: too busy or tired to maintain changes made; stress: leads to emotionally based decisions; and environment: friends, family or colleagues who bear a negative influence.

These issues can be overcome to make lasting change. The following are real-life tips to avoid common resolution pitfalls.

Be realistic with goals by not attempting to achieve too much at one time. For example, do not try to stop smoking and lose weight simultaneously. Tackle one at a time.

Make permanent changes in the daily schedule to allow for additional activities such as exercise. Simply adding a new responsibility to an already full day will lead to failure. Combining obligations or prioritizing to a different day is a way to circumvent this mistake. One way to do this is by combining social or family time with exercise.

Plan meals and snacks to eliminate eating on the run. Eating healthily is difficult to do if food is an afterthought. Spending as little as two hours a week to prepare take-along meals can prevent poor dietary choices.

Reduce stress by setting realistic parameters. Avoid overloading the daily schedule. A busy, hectic lifestyle leads to health problems sooner or later. Mounting evidence points to stress as a precursor to many ills.

Create a plan with detailed guidelines to get through the first month. After a few weeks, the new schedule will evolve into habits that replace the old ones.

Utilize these tools to break into better lifestyle choices. Remember, continuing to do as you've always done will result in being in the same situation as you've always been.

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