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### Setting and keeping resolutions for a healthier 2010

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The holiday parties are over and you're too afraid to look in the mirror — at least the full length one. It's a repeated scenario, but you've tried New Year's resolutions before only to break them a few weeks later, so what's the use?

Before you give up too easily, read what behavioral health expert Dr. Carolyn Logsdon at Pacific Medical Centers in Northgate has to say about setting realistic goals and keeping them.

Logsdon knows about following through with healthy goals — she maintains a three-time-a-week swimming regiment while working full time and raising a family. Her secret to success? Getting her family to support her efforts to pursue good health, keeping her suit, towel and goggles in the car so she can go to the pool straight from work before heading home, refusing to listen to the part of her that would rather take the evening off, and being flexible to do a partial workout when time constraints don't allow a full one.

Logsdon has observed through the years that the pool where she swims laps is packed in January, but by mid-February it has thinned out to the usual group. To help Journal readers set and maintain realistic goals for a healthy lifestyle in 2010, she gives the following ideas.

1. Consider carefully what resolutions you want to make. "It's good to do a personal history and be introspective about the past year and about your life," said Logsdon. "Think about where you are and where you want to be, and list the changes you want to make."
2. Ask yourself if you want to change badly enough to put the effort into changing your habits. "It takes time to achieve worthy goals," said Logsdon.
3. Make your goals achievable. For example, the goal of exercising five times a week sets many people up for failure. Instead, set the goal of exercising three times a week, or of walking for part of your lunch break at work. Start small and build to succeed.
4. Plan ahead to make it possible to follow through on your resolutions. Then write down your plan. For instance, if you want to eat healthier food, make sure it is accessible — write a shopping list and buy the food ahead of time, prepare food on the weekend that you can grab all week long so you aren't tempted to go through a drive through or grab some chips. "If you like chicken, roast two on the weekend and eat them throughout the week," said Logsdon. The same idea applies to cutting up vegetables ahead of time so they are easy to grab.
5. Think about the repercussions of your goals. Make achieving them easier by choosing a gym you can afford and that is convenient to your home or work.

6. Tell your family and close friends about your resolutions, and if possible, have a buddy. Then when you're tempted to quit, they can encourage you to keep going. "I make sure everybody who is important to me understands that I am going to do this," said Logsdon.

7. Explore alternatives to meeting your goals. This is important, especially with exercise, Logsdon said. She recommends having several options to get a workout in when your primary mode of exercise isn't available.

8. Beware of all or nothing thinking, which is very counterproductive, according to Logsdon. "This can trick you into not doing things because you can't do it perfectly or as well as you think you should, like not working out because your time is limited that day," she said. "Decide that even a tired, lousy workout is preferable to no workout at all." Likewise with following a healthy diet, don't give up because you overate at a party the night before — just get back on track and go forward.

9. Focus on the big picture and keep going. "Don't ask yourself if you're motivated or not — you know you need to do it, you know how good you'll feel afterwards, so do it. Focus on the benefit you will derive," said Logsdon.

In a nutshell, Logsdon said, "Be honest with yourself. Don't decide that you're going to make a 150 percent change in the way your behave when that's highly unlikely. Make a commitment to yourself to make a change you know is good for you."

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