

# Happy New Year!

## New Year Traditions

**New Year's resolutions.** That tradition dates back to the early Babylonians. Popular modern resolutions might include the promise to lose weight or quit smoking. The early Babylonian's most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment.

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## New Years Resolutions— Tips

New Year's resolutions are a great opportunity to reflect on the past year and think about changes that would improve your life and future.

Even though people really do mean to stick to their new goals, following through is the hardest part.

Change is a process— It takes time and effort and is actually difficult.

New Year's resolutions should be attainable, reasonable and reachable.

Break down your resolutions into realistic, minigoals and steps, you have more opportunities to be successful. You want to feel good every step of the way and not be upset by a setback.

Success breeds success and it will feed your motivation to continue.

You also need a good support system, whether it's a friend, spouse or outside help.

Write down what the benefit of keeping a goal would be. A journal can be a tool that can help you to keep your goals.

You don't have to wait until the beginning of the year to make changes in your life.

Don't make too many resolutions at once, and you should prioritize which ones to do now.

Congratulate yourselves for taking the first step toward a goal and acknowledge each step along the way because change is hard

Have a wonderful new year and good luck with your hopefully reachable resolutions!

—DR. DEBRA H. STERN, DIGITAL CHICAGO, INC.



## Simple Things You Can do to Improve Your Mind

- **Move:** Our bodies were meant to move and it is well-proven that physical activity of any sort, even very modest exercise leads to longer, healthier lives and decreases depression. Even 20 minutes a day can make a difference.
- **Eat Right:** Don't forget those five servings of fruits and vegetables. Drink enough water. If you are on antidepressants, be sure to get adequate amounts of protein.
- **Get Enough Sleep:** Many of us try to get by with less than eight hours a night and we are chronically tired as a result.
- **Limit Alcohol:** As you probably already know, alcohol is a depressant and can work against treatment for behavioral problems.
- **Limit Caffeine:** We live in fast times and many of us depend on caffeine to get us through.

Anything more than four 8 ounce cups of coffee, or equivalent amounts of caffeine consumed in tea or colas, can lead to real health problems with sleep and anxiety.

- **Think Positive:** When we are depressed or stressed we tend to see the world in a negative way. These negative thoughts make us even more sad. Try to be rational and positive in your thinking. It will help you feel better.
- **Connect:** Having connections to other beings is a key factor in health. This can mean being connected to family, friends, members of a church, or even a pet.
- **Communicate:** The expressions "having a heart-to-heart talk" or "getting it off my chest" really do mean something. Talk about how you feel to others. If it is difficult to share things with friends or family, therapy groups or individual therapy can really make a difference.
- **Indulge Yourself:** Believe it or not, pleasure is good for you! Think of things that you enjoy- big or small- and do them. It can be anything from listening to music you love to taking time to walk your dog. You may have to push yourself at first but it will help you heal and stay healthy.

—DR. ANINA SCHWARTZ





## Simple Prevention - Handwashing

Hand-washing is a simple and effective way to help prevent

diseases, such as colds, flu, and food poisoning.

### When to Wash Your Hands:

- Often, especially during cold and flu (influenza) season, can reduce your risk of catching or spreading a cold or the flu.
- Before and after preparing or serving food reduces your risk of catching or spreading bacteria that cause food poisoning. Be especially careful to wash before and after preparing poultry, raw eggs, meat, or seafood.
- After going to the bathroom or changing diapers reduces your risk of catching or spreading infectious diseases such as salmonella or hepatitis A.

### Wash your hands after:

- Any kind of cleaning or hand contact with dirty equipment or work surfaces.
- Caring for someone who is sick or injured.
- Taking out the garbage.
- Using the bathroom.
- Changing diapers.
- Eating or snacking.
- Handling money.
- Touching your ears, nose, or mouth.
- Blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Touching your pets.

### Proper hand-washing

- Use warm or hot water when possible. Cold water is not as effective for killing bacteria on your hands.
- Wet your hands and wrists completely under the running water.
- Apply a small dab of liquid soap. If you use bar soap, you rinse it off before you use it.
- Work up a good lather and wash all of the surfaces of your skin, including the wrist, palms, backs of your hands, fingers, and fingernails. Wash your hands for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands thoroughly.
- Dry your hands. Use your paper towel to turn off the water after you have finished.

Use gel hand sanitizers or alcohol-based hand wipes, (the alcohol in the gel kills the germs on your hands) if soap and water are not available.

HEALTH TOPICS

## Exercise Addiction

Exercise addiction is a compulsion to exercise. By exercising, those with EA reduce anxiety about being or becoming overweight, body dissatisfaction, or appearance concerns. EA has addiction features because, like drugs, EA raises endorphin levels. People with EA thus may experience feelings of well-being but with decreased awareness of emotional and physical pain and the serious, possibly permanent, health problems arising from their EA behavior. EA's greatest risk groups appear to include athletes in sports encouraging thinness or appearance standards, young and middle-age women, and young men.

Unlike other addictions, EA does not routinely involve secrecy but more often indifference or failure to recognize the problem. Those with EA often are comfortable with their EA because, unlike other compulsive behaviors such as repetitive checking, EA may be perceived as healthy and socially acceptable.

EA may lead to medical complications: stress fractures, spinal scoliosis, osteoporosis, loss of menses, heart arrhythmias, and prolonged electrical conduction of the heart with sudden death.

### Questions for EA Screening

1. DO YOU FEEL GUILTY WHEN MISSING WORKOUTS?
2. DO YOU EXERCISE WHEN SICK OR HURT?
3. WOULD YOU SKIP FAMILY TIME, GOING OUT WITH FRIENDS, OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS TO WORK OUT?
4. DO YOU CALCULATE HOW MUCH TO EXERCISE BASED ON HOW MUCH YOU EAT?
5. IS SITTING STILL PROBLEMATIC BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT BURNING ENOUGH CALORIES?
6. IF YOU CANNOT EXERCISE, DO YOU FEEL COMPELLED TO REDUCE WHAT YOU EAT?

"Yes" to one or more of these questions suggest possible EA— a comprehensive physical and psychological evaluation is recommended.

—BEHAVIORAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

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