



# Healthy resolutions for the year ahead

As the calendar turns to a new year, the focus of men and women often shifts as well. After the hectic holiday season has come and gone, many people re-dedicate themselves to their personal health and well-being. That renewed dedication might be thanks to all those big holiday meals or it might just be a result of the new calendar year being symbolic of a fresh start.

Regardless of the reasons behind this renewed vigor, the opportunities to make the next 12 months a healthier 12 months abound. While losing weight might be the most popular resolution, there are a host of other health-related resolutions individuals can make to improve their lives over the next 365 days.

### RESOLVE TO REDUCE STRESS

Stress is a major part of most adults' lives, and that's especially so after the hectic holiday season when men and women are pulled in so many different directions. Work is a common cause of stress, but family and personal finances, especially nowadays, are big sources of stress as well. This year, resolve to reduce stress in all aspects of life. At the office, analyze ways in which you can manage time more effectively, including how to best prioritize work projects so you don't always feel as if you're up against a wall. Outside the office, recognize the importance of maintaining a personal life and its relation to reducing stress. Spending time with friends and family can relax you and provide a welcome respite from the stress of the office.

### RESOLVE TO EAT BETTER

Losing weight and adopting a healthier diet are not necessarily the same thing. While a healthier diet might help you lose weight, the goal of adopting a healthier diet is to improve overall health. A healthy diet can strengthen the body's immune system, making it easier to fight cold, flu and other ailments. A healthy diet can also help in the battle against any preexisting conditions. For example, replacing salt with healthier and flavorful herbs can help reduce high blood pressure, and many people cannot even taste the difference once they start eating.

### RESOLVE TO EXERCISE MORE

Much like changing a diet, exercising more is often seen as a means to weight loss. While that's a positive side effect of daily exercise, the goal should not be to lose weight. Instead, the goal of



daily exercise is to get healthier. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, exercise helps lower the risk of heart disease and hypertension by 40 percent while lowering the risk of depression by 30 percent. In addition, men and women with a family history of diabetes should know that regular exercise lowers their risk of type 2 diabetes by nearly 60 percent. So while exercise is a great means to losing weight, it's even better at helping reduce the risk for serious disease.

When incorporating exercise into a daily routine, start slowly and gradually work your way up to more vigorous exercise regimens. Going full speed from the outset is a great way to increase risk of injury, which could actually restrict your ability to exercise for some time.

### RESOLVE TO QUIT SMOKING

To nonsmokers, keep up the good work. For smokers, perhaps some statistics are enough to get you on the path toward quitting smoking:

- More than 150,000 Americans were projected to succumb to lung cancer in 2011, according to the National Cancer Institute.
- The Canadian Cancer Society estimated that 20,000 Canadians would lose their lives to lung cancer in 2011.
- More than 6 percent of all deaths in the United Kingdom in



Quitting smoking is one of the healthiest resolutions adults can make.

2011 were related to lung cancer, according to Cancer Research UK.

If those statistics aren't enough to get men and women serious about quitting smoking, consider the negative effect secondhand smoke has on your loved ones. The American Cancer Society notes that roughly 3,000 nonsmoking adults experience lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke in the U.S. each year. When making a resolution this year, smokers' top priority should be to quit smoking.

When making resolutions at the start of a new year, men and women often focus on healthy resolutions. But healthy resolutions go beyond losing a few extra pounds, and many involve dedication throughout the year to improve overall health this year and for years to come.

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