

# KEYS TO BETTER HEALTH™

## Goal Setting for the New Year

Whether you want to eat healthier, move more, lose a few extra pounds, or quit smoking, this is the year for you! Make *and* keep your 2016 New Year's resolutions with the help of these three resolution improving tips.

### 1. Be S.M.A.R.T. when picking your goals

- **S= Specific.** When writing your goals, keep your specific target in mind. What is it that you specifically want to accomplish in 2016?
- **M= Measurable.** To support your specific goal and help you track your progress, make it measurable. Will you walk every morning or three times per week? Putting a number on your goal will help you stay on target.
- **A = Actionable.** Your goal has to be something you are able to do. Reflect on your current resources (financial, time, personal commitment) and decide what you can reasonably accomplish. Setting goals that are challenging but also achievable will help set yourself up for success.
- **R = Realistic.** In addition to being something you are able to do, your goal has to be something you are likely to do. Completely giving up sweets or working out every day for an hour might be doable at first, but is probably not something you will likely continue long-term. If your goals are realistic, you can build on your success and make them bigger over time.
- **T = Timely.** Give yourself a timeframe to help keep your goal measurable. Time can be measured in days, weeks, months, or even the entire year. The important point is to give yourself a period of time to avoid procrastination and encourage daily effort.

How can S.M.A.R.T. goals fit with your life? Here are a few examples to help you get started.

- I will increase my physical activity by joining my neighbors for their morning walk on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.
- I will reduce my sugar intake by swapping water in place of soda five times per week.
- I will eat healthier by adding a serving of vegetables to my evening meal and a serving of fruit to breakfast five times per week.

### 2. Keep the Momentum Going!

Now that you have your smart goals identified, how do you keep up your momentum? First, **be specific with why you want to achieve your goals.** Is it to have more energy to play with your children or perhaps to reverse a medical diagnosis of pre-diabetes? Whatever your motivation may be, keep it front of mind with visual cues such as pictures of your family or motivational phrases. Second, **don't sweat the small stuff.** The most important thing when working toward a goal is to keep moving forward. It's okay if you miss a day at the gym or indulge in a few extra treats over a weekend as long as you don't give up altogether. Visualize yourself reaching your goal one year from now and realize that **the only way to get there is if you start today** and don't give up.

### 3. Use Your Resources

Self-improvement doesn't have to take a lot of time or money. There are many inexpensive, easy-to-use community resources to help you on your way including:

- **Make it a Family Affair** - Encourage your family and friends to join you in your pursuit of a healthier lifestyle. Building up your support system is a key part of meeting your goals. Start a morning walking club in your neighborhood, set up a time for a weekly family walk or bike ride, or enlist your kids to help prepare a healthy meal. Success is easier to achieve if you have support by your side.
- **Track Your Progress - USDA's MyPlate Super Tracker** is a free, personalized, and easy-to-use website from the USDA that can help you realize your health goals this year. Supportive functions include the ability to create personalized nutrition and activity plans, track your daily physical activity and food intake, and provide overall support to live a healthier life. Visit [www.supertracker.usda.gov](http://www.supertracker.usda.gov) to get started today.
- **Registered Dietitians** - Whether it's at your local grocery store or medical center, Registered Dietitians can help you design goals that will keep you on track. For articles on health and nutrition and to find a Registered Dietitian near you, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

