

New Year's Resolutions?

I always find this time of year a very introspective one. I find myself asking the same questions every year. What did I truly accomplish last year? Did I make a positive impact in someone's life? Am I a better person? What am I going to accomplish this year? How am I going to make a positive impact in someone's life now? What am I going to do to be a better person?

Do you find yourselves doing this? Do you make new year's resolutions and set goals based on the answers you have? How long do they last? Many studies have shown that we typically give up on pursuing these resolutions and goals within the first month of the new year. An interesting non-scientific study published last year looked at the factors of goal flexibility and tenacity and what effect they had on keeping new year's resolutions and goals.

Unsurprisingly, what was found was that many of the 182 people surveyed over time did not keep their resolutions, but those who were more flexible and adaptive in their goal pursuit reported greater wellbeing than those who were more tenacious.

The take home message is that the more flexible you are in the pursuit of your goals, i.e., the ability to view setbacks with patience and composure and adjust as needed, the better you feel.

As you work on your new year's resolutions and goals, consider

the following:

- As little as 30 minutes per week of moderate intensity physical activity can reduce your risk of dying from any cause by as much as 20%.
- The more minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, the greater the risk reduction, up to around 150 minutes per week.
- Regular activity lowers the risk of all forms of dementia.
- Regular activity reduces feelings of anxiety and depression in healthy people

You don't need to run a marathon to improve your health. And although daily activity is great, the healthiest approach to your new year's goals is the ability to adjust and adapt. If you miss a day of activity, start again tomorrow instead of giving up. That's the flexibility I'm talking about!

Think of it this way – if you can immediately succeed in 100% in your goals, they were probably too easy. Try setting your goals in the context of the SMART acronym. Yours might look something like this:

Specific – I will walk for 10 minutes on my afternoon break every weekday.

Measurable – I will set the timer on my watch for 10 minutes when I begin.

Achievable – I have a 15-minute break every afternoon, and I

don't have to count on the weekends.

Relevant – I know I will feel better if I walk 10 minutes every weekday. That's more than 30 minutes per week!!!

Time-bound – I will go from January 17 through February 18, 2022, when I will assess my progress and make any changes I want to get me through the next 30 days.

Write down your SMART plan and look at it every day to remind yourself that, "Yes, I can do this!" Then act on it. Some days will be easier than others, so remember to be flexible, adaptable, and confident in achieving your goal. For more help and ideas, see our help center article on [sticking to your resolutions](#).

Make it a great year for yourself! You deserve it!

Stay happy, stay healthy, and keep smiling!

Jeff Lee, MD

Medical Director

