

# York University Staff Association Health and Wellness News and Views

Coming hard on the heels of the party hearty holidays, January 1<sup>st</sup> seems to be a natural time to start fresh. Health related New Year resolutions are the most popular amongst men and women around the world. If one of your New Year's resolutions is to improve your health and lose weight, you've got a lot of company. According to recent studies, about 80% of Canadians said that taking care of their health and making better eating choices was their number 1 resolution.

But can you really stick to your resolutions month after month, year after year? You Bet!

## **Put things into perspective**

Vague resolutions like "eat better" or "exercise more" are to wishy washy... Therefore easy to fudge and eventually forget all together. You'll have a much better chance of succeeding with a specific, measurable goal, like taking the dog for a walk 1 kilometer every day, or making a decision to only eat out once a month, or even simpler and very attainable, start putting milk in your coffee instead of cream.

Grandiose plans to radically overhaul your diet on January 1<sup>st</sup> are usually doomed to failure. You'll get a lot more mileage out of choosing a couple of small but meaningful changes that you can stick to until they've become ingrained habits.

## **Be Realistic**

With obesity rising and health issues becoming a matter of concern, losing weight has become many people's priority. However many fail to carry out their noble intentions. The reason being, that many people set high targets for themselves, so they often get discouraged if they don't see the expected results in as early as a week or months time. People need to make realistic achievable goals for themselves and need to remain consistent with their exercise plan. Those who do not find enough time to hit the gym or take up regular exercising should make minor changes in their lifestyles. For instance using the stairs instead of an escalator or elevator, or walking a little bit further in the parking lot. Or... why not come out

and take advantage of YUSA's free lunch time fitness program? ☺ It only takes a few days a week and you will be on your way to a happier healthier YOU in 2012.

## **Be Optimistic**

Most people don't really expect to succeed in keeping New Year's resolutions. Maybe that's because so many of us have failed in the past. Or maybe it is a part of our negative frame of mind in making them in the first place. Whatever the reason, if you expect to fail, you probably will. Setting a goal and making a step by step plan will go a long way towards helping you feel positive, committed and in control.

## **Go Public**

You might also want to tell a few people that are close to you about your resolution. Making a public announcement of your intention will also increase your chances of success and the support of others can help greatly. So don't keep your New Years resolution a secret, let the world know.

## **Make a new kind of resolution**

Most New Year's resolutions have to do with self improvement and changing personal habits. In these troubled times it might be a good idea to think outside the box and consider a new kind of resolution, one that includes helping others. Rather than changing oneself. It is often easier to keep a commitment made to another than one made to oneself. It is also very fulfilling to feel that you have really helped. This sort of resolution can be anything from volunteering at a local soup kitchen to helping an elderly neighbor out by shoveling their driveway.

Stop and think not only of your family but of your wider circle of acquaintances in your community. I am sure you will find lots of opportunities. The beauty of this kind of resolution is that you can make your own hours. Lend a helping hand for a day, a week, a month or any time you choose. In addition you get your mind off of your own troubles and stresses. Hopefully you will end up feeling like you gained more than you gave. Whatever you decide, I wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2012.

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