



New Year's Action Plan

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The following shows how many of these resolutions are maintained as time goes on:

- past the first week: 75%
- past 2 weeks: 71%
- after one month: 64%
- after 6 months: 46% (1)

But don't let those stats convince you to plop down on your couch with a bag of chips. People who explicitly make resolutions are 10 times more likely to attain their goals than people who don't explicitly make resolutions. (1) So, if you want to lose weight or just get more fit, then resolving to do so may be beneficial to you. Just make sure you have an action plan that helps ensure your success.

A Department of Labor survey of adults asked them to identify the biggest issue that prevents them from achieving their [New Years](#) Resolutions or goals. The top 3 reasons identified were as follows: Procrastinating 33%; Lack of discipline 24%; No game plan 19%.

Here is a specific action plan for diet and fitness related resolutions that will help eliminate these three top issues.

Find a positive support system. For some, family may be just what they need. But, if your family members are struggling with the same diet or [weight loss](#) issues as you and aren't ready to commit themselves to change, then you might want to look elsewhere. Friends may also be an option, but again if they are struggling with their own issues then you might want to enlist other help. Try finding a local support group of like-minded people, go online for a virtual support group or seek out the help of a professional personal trainer or dietician.

Don't put off tomorrow what you can do today. One of the biggest obstacles new dieters/exercisers face is just getting started. If you continue to say "I'll start tomorrow", then you may find that tomorrow never comes. You repeatedly push it off and before you know it another year has passed by while you remain in the same place you were before. If you promise to start tomorrow, then do it! Don't allow any other "priority" to get in the way. At the risk of sounding cliché, Just Do It!

*Start a new exercise plan slowly but remain consistent and build up on it.
Follow this example:*

Week 1: Walk for 20- 30 minutes just 2 times per week.

Week 2: Increase your walking frequency to 3 times per week. Add in one day of strength training. Try 5-10 exercises to target your entire body.

Weeks 3-4: Maintain the three days of walking and increase the strength training to two times per week.

Weeks 5-6: Increase the intensity of your walk sessions by increasing the speed and/or increasing the incline. If possible, walk four times per week and strength train 3 times per week.

Weeks 7-8: Time to change things up to keep your body challenged and avoid plateaus and burnout. Try adding a different cardio option at least two times per week (swimming, jogging, playing a sport, etc.). For the strength training, try new techniques like pyramids or supersets. You may need to enlist the help of a personal trainer for new ideas.

Start a new diet plan slowly but consistently. Avoid labeling any foods as "bad". Eat a variety but in moderation and include more of the nutritionally dense foods.

Week 1: Improve your hydration through your daily water intake. Try to consume approximately 64 ounces per day.

Week 2: Add in one extra vegetable a day until you are eating 5 servings of vegetables every day.

Week 3: Include one serving of lean protein at every meal.

Week 4: Limit starches and sweets (simple carbohydrates).

The above exercise and diet recommendations give you a substantial game plan for your first two months. All you have to do is implement it. Post this action plan on your refrigerator or somewhere else that will force you to look at it every day. And, mark every action on your daily calendar to ensure it doesn't get bumped by some other priority.

Also, remember that setbacks are normal and should not spell disaster for your resolution. If you are following your game plan 90% of the time and only 10% of the time falling off the wagon, then pat yourself on the back and cut yourself a little slack! If you find yourself starting to really wane from the plan, then tap back into what helped you initially get motivated. Don't give up. Just start where you can (even if that's taking a few steps backward) and head toward your goal.