

Choosing Your New Year's Resolutions

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At this time of year, you may be considering whether you're going to make a New Year's resolution. Maybe you've made them in the past and lost interest over time. Or perhaps you buckled down and followed through. Either way, you're now facing the beginning of another new year.

Even if you're less-than-thrilled with your follow-through in prior years, the new year brings amazing opportunities to challenge yourself in all kinds of ways.

Try these ideas to help you set up your resolutions so you'll be successful during the coming year:

- 1. Select an area of your life that's important to you.** One of the keys to choosing your New Year's resolutions is selecting a goal that truly matters. Ideally, you can find something you want more than anything. This will help keep you dedicated.
- 2. Be specific.** The whole idea of making a New Year's resolution can seem over-simplified. You'll hear people say, "My New Year's resolution is to get in to shape" or "I want to work less."
 - What do statements like, "I want to spend more time with my family this coming year" really mean? Here's how to be more specific:
 - For the resolution to get into shape, why not state it in more detail? Consider committing to specifics, such as, "I want to lose 2 inches from my waist and 3 inches from my hips."
 - Another example of being more exacting might be "I want to increase visual muscle definition in my abdominals and my upper arms."

3. Make your resolution measurable. How will you measure your results?

- For example, spending more time with your family may manifest as, "I plan to work 4 hours less per week in the coming year," or "I won't work on Saturdays, starting January 1st."

4. Structure your resolution using mini-goals. Consider cutting your overall goal into smaller, separate goals. Select the first mini-goal to accomplish in the process and designate it as your New Year's resolution for the first 3 months.

- Consider this example: You want to lose 30 pounds. You've struggled to drop the weight in the past. But you want to get serious now.
- Here's one way to cut this into mini-goals: Lose 10 pounds in the first 3 months of the year, lose another 10 pounds in the second quarter of the year and drop the final 10 pounds the third quarter of the year. The fourth quarter of the year, plan to focus on maintaining your weight loss.

5. Be realistic. It might not be possible for you to accomplish everything you want in just one year. But you probably can be well on your way to your goal by the end of the year if your New Year's resolution is within reasonable standards.

When selecting your New Year's resolutions, focus on what matters to you. Be specific and make your resolutions measurable. Use mini-goals and be realistic in establishing whatever resolutions you select.

By addressing your resolution as a process rather than just a goal, you're much more likely to succeed. And when you achieve one goal, you're more apt to set resolutions and accomplish them in the years that follow. Start this year to make each year your best one ever!