

## LIFESTYLE

# How to make New Year's resolutions that last

DO YOU PROMISE YOURSELF EVERY YEAR THAT YOU'LL EAT AND DRINK LESS AND EXERCISE AND EARN MORE? HERE'S HOW TO SET GOALS AND ACTUALLY ACHIEVE THEM. BY Charmaine Yabsley



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**A** survey of 1000 Australians found 69 per cent of us intend to make at least one New Year's resolution. And while less than a quarter of us will stick to achieving our goals, there is a secret to succeeding.

A year-long study at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK found the key to keeping your resolutions varies according to your gender. For men, setting specific goals, such as "lose five kilograms by April", rather than just "lose weight", is best. Women should share their resolutions for the coming year with others, as, according to study leader Professor Richard Wiseman, "women benefit from the social support provided by friends and family".

"If you halve your goal you'll be more likely to achieve it," dietitian Kate DiPrima says. "Instead of saying you'll exercise every day, make a commitment for three times a week. This way you'll have a sense of achievement rather than failure."

## STOP SMOKING

According to a study conducted on behalf of pharmaceutical company Pfizer, of the three million Australians who smoke, a quarter make a New Year's resolution to quit, and nine out of 10 of these resolutions fail.

"Reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke each day, go cold turkey, use nicotine-replacement patches or pills to help you quit," says Professor Ian Olver, Cancer Council Australia CEO. Speak to your GP or call the Quitline on 13 18 48.

## LOSE WEIGHT

Seek advice on losing weight. In a study at Canada's McMaster University, those who were

new to an exercise activity performed better when their goals were set by a professional.

"It's important to be realistic in your weight-loss goals," says Mireille Ryan, personal trainer and 2010 Australian Exercise Professional of the Year.

Ryan suggests aiming for a sensible weight loss of 0.5 to one kilogram per week and keeping motivated with "mini goals".

"Instead of wanting to lose 10 kilos, focus on reaching milestones. Aim to lose two kilos in 30 days and reward yourself with a massage or a new pair of running shoes."

## CUT DOWN BOOZE

Good news: cutting out your glass of chardonnay isn't the only way to become healthier.

Rather than going cold turkey, cut back on your overall intake and choose cleaner options. Choose red wine (organic and sulfur-free where available) instead of beer.

"Making better choices is the first step and then you'll be more likely to make permanent health shifts," nutritionist Emma Sgourakis says. "Remove other stimulants and sugary snacks, which can be just as bad for you as the fermented sugar from alcohol."

When you are eating healthily, Sgourakis says, you'll be less inclined to want to pollute your system with toxins. "Start the day with a fresh vegetable juice of celery, cucumber, spinach and carrot. Add fresh lemon juice, ginger and a green apple for a bit of sweetness. I call it intestinal soap to clean out your insides!"

## CHANGE JOBS

Before you write your letter of resignation, do your homework. "Be prepared to get what you want by knowing what you want," wellness and performance coach Fiona Cosgrove says. "Write

down in as much detail what your new job would consist of. Don't worry about the 'how'; make it as exciting as possible."

Then network and do your research. Make up a 10-step list of how you're going to accomplish getting that job. "Ask a friend or partner for support," Cosgrove says.

And if you're seeking promotion? "The key is to do your homework so that when you're in the meeting with your boss, you can be confident, convincing and compelling," says Peter Acheson, CEO of recruitment specialists Peoplebank. "Highlight your achievements in your current role, because your manager will be buying your current achievements, as well as your potential."

## SPEND MORE TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

"As a family, make a commitment to each other, such as promising to eat Sunday breakfast together every week, or have 'date' nights with your children - one on one - without any other family interruptions," says Maggie Dent, author of *Saving Our Children From Our Chaotic World* (Pennington Publications).

## MAKE YOUR LIST

According to Lindsay Tighe, life coach and author of *The Answer: Improve Your Life By Asking Better Questions* (Griffin Press), writing down your resolutions is a positive step towards achieving them.

- What do I want to change and by when?
- Why must I make this change?
- What are the steps I need to take?
- Who can support me?
- How will I motivate myself?

Look for areas in your life where you can socialise with others: walking the dog, movie nights or bike rides. "These are all activities you can do together that won't cost anything and require little organisation," Dent says.

## SAVE MONEY

For those vowing this will be the year they save for a deposit on a house, start small for big results.

"Take a look at a few of your weekly habits to see where you could free up some cash," says Analaura Luna, from the website, *Your Family Your Money*. "The easiest budget cuts to make are on takeaway foods and coffee. Buying just one takeaway coffee less a day, at \$3.50, adds up to \$840 a year." 

