



DID YOU KNOW??



MAKING SUCCESSFUL NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

It's that time of year when we all want to accomplish goals which may have been on our "to do" list for a long time. Many of us feel that January 1st is the best time to finally resolve and successfully accomplish these goals (*our New Year's resolutions*).

However, in very short order we struggle with keeping the resolution(s) and it leaves us feeling like a failure.

Here are some tips that may help:

- 1) **Make resolutions that you think you can keep.** If, for example, your aim is to exercise more frequently, schedule three or four days a week at the gym instead of seven. If you would like to eat healthier, try replacing dessert with something else you enjoy, like fruit or yogurt, instead of seeing your diet as a form of punishment.
- 2) **Unhealthy behaviors develop over the course of time.** Thus, replacing unhealthy behaviors with healthy ones requires time. Don't get overwhelmed and think that you have to reassess everything in your life. Instead, work toward changing one thing at a time.
- 3) **Share your experiences with family and friends.** Consider joining a support group to reach your goals, such as a workout class at your gym or a group of coworkers quitting smoking. Having someone to share your struggles and successes with makes your journey to a healthier lifestyle that much easier and less intimidating.
- 4) **Perfection is unattainable.** Remember that minor missteps when reaching your goals are completely normal and OK. Don't give up completely because you ate a brownie and broke your diet, or skipped the gym for a week because you were busy. Everyone has ups and downs; resolve to recover from your mistakes and get back on track.
- 5) **Accepting help from those who care about you and will listen strengthens your resilience and ability to manage stress.** If you feel overwhelmed or unable to meet your goals on your own, consider seeking professional help. Psychologists are uniquely trained to understand the connection between the mind and body. They can offer strategies as to how to adjust your goals so that they are attainable, as well as help you change unhealthy behaviors and address emotional issues.

Excerpts from American Psychological Association