

# An Ounce of Prevention

Complimentary

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## Tips for Making Good New Year's Resolutions

By: MyGoals.com

There is a right way and a wrong way to make a New Year's resolution. Here are a few expert tips to see that your resolution actually makes a difference:

### 1. Create a Plan

Setting a goal without formulating a plan is merely wishful thinking. In order for your resolution to *have resolve*, (as the word "resolution" implies), it must translate into clear steps that can be put into action. A good plan will tell you A) What to do next and B) What are all of the steps required to complete the goal.

### 2. Create Your Plan IMMEDIATELY

If you're like most people, then you'll have a limited window of opportunity during the first few days of January to harness your motivation. After that, most people forget their resolutions completely.

### 3. Write Down Your Resolution and Plan

myGoals.com exists to help you formulate a plan, which we then help you stick to. But even if you don't use myGoals.com, commit your resolution and plan in writing someplace, such as a notebook or journal.

### 4. Think "Year Round," Not Just New Year's

Nothing big gets accomplished in one day. Resolutions are set in one day, but accomplished with a hundred tiny steps that happen throughout the year. New Year's resolutions should be nothing more than a starting point. You must develop a ritual or habit for revisiting your plan. myGoals.com helps you stick to your plan by providing email reminders that arrive when it's time to work on a given task.

And finally...

### 5. Remain Flexible

Expect that your plan can and will change. Life has a funny way of throwing unexpected things at us, and flexibility is required to complete anything but the simplest goal. Sometimes the goal itself will even change. Most of all, recognize partial successes at every step along the way. Just as a resolution isn't accomplished the day it's stated, neither is it accomplished the day you reach your goal. Rather, it's accomplished in many small increments along the way. Acknowledge these incremental successes as they come.

## Women Who Sleep Less May Gain More Weight.

A 16-year study of 68,183 middle-age women finds that over time less sleep may lead to more weight gain. The study, which began in 1986, noted the participants' initial weight and sleep habits and then tracked these factors every two years for the next 16 years. The results showed that not only did the women who received five hours or less sleep per night weigh on average 5.4 pounds more than the women who slept 7 hours or more per night, but they had also gained more weight than their well-rested counterparts by the end of the study. The researchers found that, surprisingly, the women who slept less were not bigger eaters (researchers hypothesized that after sleep restriction the hormones that control appetite cause people to become hungrier) or less likely to exercise. These findings led the researchers to believe that sleep deprivation plays a role in weight gain, though the exact mechanism is not yet clear. Though sleep and obesity have been linked through mounting studies and scientific evidence, this is the first study to show that lack of sleep increases weight gain over time in a large number of people.

The study findings were presented on May 23rd at the American Thoracic Society International Conference in San Diego.

For more info go to:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com>

## Men and Depression

Researchers estimate that at least six million men in the United States suffer from a depressive disorder every year. Research and clinical evidence reveal that while both women and men can develop the standard symptoms of depression, they often experience depression differently and may have different ways of coping with the symptoms. Men may be more willing to acknowledge fatigue, irritability, and loss of interest in work or hobbies, and sleep disturbances rather than feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and excessive guilt. Some researchers question whether the standard definition of depression and the diagnostic tests based upon it adequately capture the condition as it occurs in men.

Men are more likely than women to report alcohol and drug abuse or dependence in their lifetime; however, there is debate among researchers as to whether substance use is a "symptom" of underlying depression in men, or a co-occurring condition that more commonly develops in men. Nevertheless, substance use can mask depression, making it harder to recognize depression as a separate illness that needs treatment.

Instead of acknowledging their feelings, asking for help, or seeking appropriate treatment, men may turn to alcohol or drugs when they are depressed, or become frustrated, discouraged, angry, irritable and, sometimes, violently abusive. Some men deal with depression by throwing themselves compulsively into their work, attempting to hide their depression from themselves, family, and friends; other men may respond to depression by engaging in reckless behaviour, taking risks, and putting themselves in harm's way.

Four times as many men as women die by suicide in the United States, even though women make more suicide attempts during their lives. In addition to the fact that the methods men use to attempt suicide are generally more lethal than those methods used by women, there may be other issues that protect women against suicide death. In light of research indicating that suicide is often associated with depression, the alarming suicide rate among men may reflect the fact that men are less likely to seek treatment for depression. Many men with depression do not obtain adequate diagnosis and treatment, which may be life saving.

More research is needed to understand all aspects of depression in men, including how men respond to stress and feelings associated with depression, how to make them more comfortable acknowledging these feelings and getting the help they need, and how to train physicians to better recognize and treat depression in men. Family members, friends, and employee assistance professionals in the workplace also can play important roles in recognizing depressive symptoms in men and helping them get treatment.

For more information on Men and Depression visit <http://menanddepression.nimh.nih.gov/>

## Procrastination

It's tempting for kids this age to avoid their homework and chores. We've got tips for ending procrastination, fast.

- **Be a motivator.** Encourage your child to work first and play later by building rewards into your rules. Renee Sprengler, of Lincoln, Nebraska, gives her 7-and 9-year-old sons a star each if they're in the car by 7:20 am on weekdays. "When either child has earned five stars, he can trade them in for an activity, such as extra computer time," Sprengler says

- **Spell out the steps.** Walk your child through the task you want her to do, even if the instructions seem obvious to you. When 6-year-old Samantha Stolicky kept stalling about putting away her toys, her father, Kevin, realized that she had forgotten where they belonged. "We had rearranged the living room," says the Tulsa father of four. "So we reviewed where everything went."

- **Stick around.** You don't need to hover, but staying nearby while your child works will remind him of the task at hand and allow you to offer encouragement.

- **Fine-tune her sense of time.** You can use a timer to teach your child to work steadily. Set it for ten or

15 minutes, and have your child concentrate on finishing a job, such as folding the clean towels. When the buzzer goes off, let her collect a reward if she's completed the task. "Some kids have never worked for 15 minutes straight," Emmett says. "They don't realize how much they can get done in this time frame."

- **Break up big jobs.** List each step in a big project and work out an order. Then create a manageable schedule together. Bonnie Upright, of Jacksonville, Florida, and her daughter, Sydney, 6, set up such a plan for bedroom cleaning. First, Sydney picks up her clothes, and then she gets a short break. Next, she puts away her toys and takes another breather, Upright explains.

- **Set a good example.** When you're face with a chore that you'd rather avoid, say to your child, "You know, I really hate grocery shopping. I wish I could push a magic button so I wouldn't have to do it." Then explain how you'll make the job more fun – for instance, by listening to your favorite CD on the way there. Afterward, tell her how satisfying it feels to have the work done.

- **Dig a little.** If your child continues to back away from certain tasks, he may be afraid of failing or disappointing someone. Figure out what's going on, and then reassure him that you understand what he's feeling as you ease his fears. "Help your child identify what's holding him back," Dr. Talkoff says. "Talking about the road block will help him move in the right direction."

### \*\*\*Net News\*\*\*

Here are some web sites you & your family may find helpful.

Require help managing your diet? Or do you just want to live a healthier lifestyle? Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating is at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)  
This presents an overview of sleep disorders and provides basic tips for getting a good nights sleep [www.sleepfoundation.org/publications/letsleepwork.html](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/publications/letsleepwork.html)

For information or links to health tips, visit: [www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca)

Parents, The Anti-Drug Website: [www.theantidrug.com/advice/](http://www.theantidrug.com/advice/)

**Tips for Talking to Children about the Newtown Shooting;** Go to the [NYTimes.com](http://NYTimes.com) and search: Tips for Talking to Children about the Newtown Shooting

### Self- Help Corner:

Alcoholics Anonymous: 780-424-5900

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

Al-Anon: 780-433-1818

Alateen: 780-433-1818

Support Network / Distress Line: 211

Cocaine Anonymous: 780-425-2715

### Informative Links:

Learn about the cycles of sleeping and waking from the National Sleep Foundation.

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/doze/>

Active Living Website:

<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca>