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Eat Smart Newsletter  
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## Keeping Sight of Your New Year's Resolutions

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New Year's resolutions to lose weight, join a gym, eat healthier, stop smoking, or save money all sound like good ideas – but sticking with them throughout the whole year can be easier said than done. Below are 5 strategies to ensure you will accomplish your resolutions this year (adapted from the article 'How to Reach Your Goals,' by WebMD's Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD; and the study 'How to Keep Up with New Year's Resolutions,' by University of Washington professor Dr. Alan Marlatt, PhD).

1. **Have a strong commitment to make a change:** You truly have to be ready to make a change in order for it to last. Part of this readiness includes having the *confidence in your ability* to make the behavior change. The remaining strategies will help build your confidence as you work toward your goal.
2. **Be specific:** You'll be more likely to succeed if you turn a general goal into specific, achievable behaviors.
  - Instead of "I will exercise" (general goal), be more specific: "I will walk 20 minutes every day after work, increasing my time by 5 minutes a month until I'm walking 60 minutes a day" (specific, achievable behaviors).
  - Instead of "I will eat healthier" (general goal), pick a behavior that is specific to a dietary habit you find problematic: "I will replace white bread with wheat bread," or "I will pack a lunch every night that I can bring to work the following day instead of eating out" (specific, achievable behaviors).
3. **Have coping strategies to deal with problems that will come up:** Behavior change isn't easy, and it's certainly not a one-time effort. It will likely take most of us more than one try before we quit smoking, stick to a workout routine, lose weight, budget money, etc. Having coping strategies in place will ensure that little setbacks won't cause you to give up on your goal.
4. **Find support:** Seek out one or more people in your life whose support and encouragement will contribute to your success. Maybe you'll even discover that a friend or family member has a similar goal and you can work together on your behavior change.
5. **Keep track of your progress:** The more monitoring you do, the better you will do. A journal or log of your goal-related activities will help you track how far you've come.



*You're more likely to stick with your New Year's Resolution if you've thought it through and come up with a plan for success.*

Adapted from:

University of Washington study [<http://www.washington.edu/newsroom/news/1997archive/12-97archive/k122397.html>]

WebMD article on reaching goals [[http://women.webmd.com/features/reach-personal-goals?ecd=wnl\\_lbt\\_121207](http://women.webmd.com/features/reach-personal-goals?ecd=wnl_lbt_121207)]

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