

January 2011

January: It's a New Year!— Goal Setting

Sticking to Your New Year's Exercise Resolution

It's that time of year again—champagne flows, balls drop, and New Year's resolutions are made. Resolutions run the gamut—from quitting smoking or being more productive at work to eating more vegetables or losing 10 pounds. A majority of resolutions, though, revolve around exercise. People often pledge to start an exercise program, get back on track with a program they resolved to start last year, or raise the intensity of their current exercise program. Do you make the same fitness resolutions year after year? Here is some advice on making your exercise goals attainable and sustainable in the New Year.

Working With a Personal Trainer

Laurie, a 29-year-old editor, was exercising six to seven days a week, seeing no improvement, and starting to burn out. After talking with a trainer, Laurie realized that her program needed revitalization. "The personal trainer pointed out that my workout was stale," Laurie explains. "He encouraged me to incorporate different exercises and taught me how to work with free weights. I started playing basketball again, going to step aerobics and kick boxing classes, and even began lap swimming. Now I ask myself what I feel like doing each day, rather than dragging myself to the StairMaster." Reworking Laurie's exercise program paid off. Within six months she lost 10 pounds and has kept the weight off for almost four years. More importantly, though, she has stuck with her exercise program.

Tips for Success

Write it down.

To get a clear understanding of your resolution, write out the specifics of your new workout plan.

Be active with friends.

Meet a friend to go for a walk or inline skating or biking or hiking or play racquetball—the options are endless.

Do it for yourself.

Make a resolution because you really want to—not to please someone else. Regular exercise will make you look better, but it will also make you feel better.

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Source: Mary Calvagna, MS
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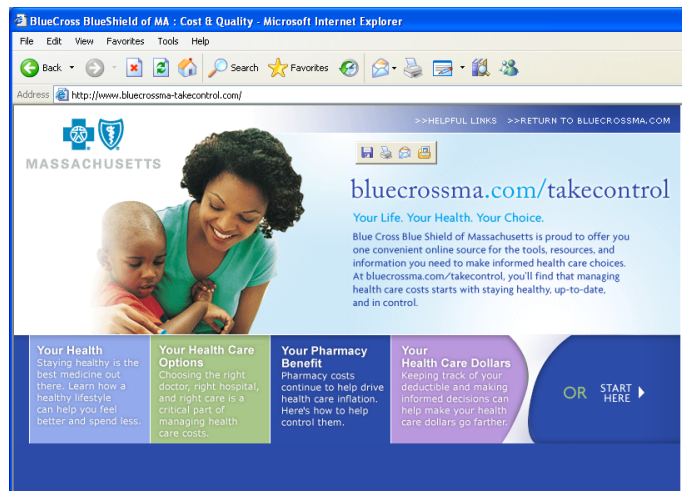
MyBlueHealth Website Helps you Set Goals

BCBSMA's wellness website will guide you through assessing your health and the goal-setting process to create a tailored plan that fits your needs.

You can start by completing a health assessment questionnaire to identify areas for improvement, or you can skip right to setting up your goals. Because health concerns can be related, we encourage you to start by assessing your health. This comprehensive approach ensures you're able to find the source of a health concern - and not just treat its symptoms. Goal setting areas include better nutrition, stopping smoking, increasing exercise and losing weight. To start your new goals, register and log-in to <https://www.mybluehealthma.com> and navigate to Change Goals under the My Plans Tab.

Setting a Goal for Taking Control of Your Health Choices

bluecrossma.com/takecontrol offers a centralized point of access to the resources that help simplify the health care decision making process. Tools to support decision care issues such as the best hospitals for various procedures, anticipated out of pocket calculators to help determine spending, and plan comparison tools for simplifying the decision making process. Informational resources help educate members on the benefits of generic medications, the importance of patient safety, how to save money on prescription medications, and the extensive discounts available to them. For more information navigate to the web link listed below.



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Setting a Goal: Decrease Stress In Your Life through Meditation

Meditation involves focusing your mind continuously on one thought, word (mantra), object, or mental image for a period of time. It can also involve focusing on your breathing or on sensations in your body. The goal of meditation is to quiet your mind.

Benefits of Meditation

Meditation leads to changes in the body known as the relaxation response. These changes accompany deep relaxation and may include:

- Reduced heart rate and blood pressure
- Reduced respiratory rate and oxygen consumption
- Reduced blood flow to skeletal muscles

The following guidelines are recommended for meditation:

- Try to do it every day, preferably at the same time
- It is best to do it before eating, when the stomach is empty.

Basic Technique

There are many different types of meditation and no right technique for everybody. You need to find out what works best for you. Most types of meditation include the following basic elements:

- Position—Before engaging your mind, follow guidelines to make your body comfortable. Sit in a relaxed position on the floor or in a chair. If you choose a chair, keep your knees comfortably apart and rest your hands in your lap.
- Focus—In order to direct your thoughts: close your eyes, focus your attention on a mental image, mental object (i.e. a candle) or a silent thought, word, or prayer.
- Attitude—It is important to maintain a gentle and nonjudgmental attitude while you meditate.
- Breathing—Proper breathing can enhance your experience.

Meditation should become easier with regular practice. Experiment to find out what technique works best for you. Consider taking a meditation class. Some have a spiritual focus and others are more focused on stress reduction.

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Source: Author: Amy Scholten, MPH
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Setting a Goal to Eat Healthier A Healthy Recipe: Winter Vegetable Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 cup- Onions, cut into ½ inch wedges
- 1 Sweet potato
- 2 Carrots
- 1 pound Banana or Hubbard squash
- 1 cup- Parsnips
- 2 Garlic cloves
- 1 Red bell pepper
- 2 cups Low sodium, low-fat vegetable broth
- 1 cup puréed tomato
- 2 tablespoons Lime juice
- ¼ teaspoon Cayenne
- 1 (10 ounce) package Frozen peas
- ¼ teaspoon Salt
- 1/8 teaspoon Black pepper
- 1 bunch Cilantro sprigs, rinsed, or thinly sliced green onions

Instructions:

Peel onions and cut into ½ inch thick wedges. Peel the sweet potato, carrots, squash, and parsnips; cut into ¾ inch pieces. Peel and mince or press garlic. Rinse bell pepper; stem, seed, and cut into ½ inch strips. Cook onions, sweet potato, carrots, squash, parsnips, garlic, and 1 cup of broth in a covered pan for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add a few tablespoons of water if mixture begins sticking to pan. Add 1 more cup of broth, along with the bell pepper, tomato sauce, lime juice, and cayenne to taste. Return to a boil, and then reduce heat. Simmer covered until vegetables are tender when pierced, about 12 to 15 minutes. If stew sticks to pan or gets thicker than desired, add more broth as needed. Add peas and stir occasionally until hot, about 2 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into soup bowls, and garnish with cilantro or sliced green onions.

Nutrition Facts:

Serving Size 1/6 recipe
Calories 150
Calories from Fat 10
Total Fat 2 g
Saturated Fat 1 g
Cholesterol 0 mg
Sodium 390 mg
Total Carbohydrate 31 g
Dietary Fiber 7 g
Sugars 8 g
Proteins 7 g

Servings and Times: Servings 6

Preparation Time: 45 minutes

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