



Living Well Newsletter

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Rethinking Resolutions

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When did New Year's Day and weight loss become one? Was it in the early '80s after Olivia Newton-John's "Let's Get Physical" music video debuted? The video started a fitness craze and an obsession with leg warmers. Since, and well before that time, millions of Americans have made it their New Year's resolution to lose weight. If half of those Americans are successful, what happens to the other half?

Resolutions work like this:

The first week after the New Year, we get focused and set one big goal for the year. If it is weight loss, we vow to lose 'X' number of pounds by next year. During the month of January, the gyms are packed, McDonald's is deserted, and I answer a lot of questions about weight-loss supplements. It is an exciting time to see so many people taking a proactive approach to get healthy.

Think about the first year you made a resolution to be healthier. Did it last throughout the year? Did you make it to summer? Now, imagine where you might be if you stuck to just one of those resolutions. Twenty pounds lighter? Off your blood pressure medications? Even though it seems impossible to stick to lifestyle changes come March, it is worth it when you can look back in December and say, "I did it!"

Rethink your resolutions this year.

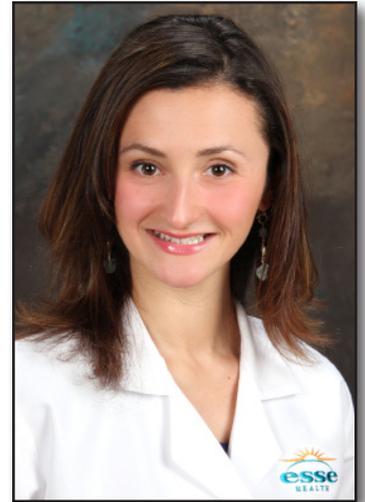
Here's how:

- Make realistic goals: set a weight-loss goal for each month. Aim for four to eight pounds per month if you have more than 30 pounds to lose.
- Make specific goals: "I will lose six pounds in January by walking around the track for 40 minutes, four days a week and by eating fruit in the afternoon instead of chips."
- Think outside the weight-loss box: set a different healthy goal, like eating an additional serving of vegetables each day or attending a new kickboxing class.
- Get a check-up: if you know your blood pressure, cholesterol or body mass index (BMI), then you can set goals to improve these numbers. Goals specific to lowering cholesterol could include eating more high-fiber foods or adding flaxseed to your cereal.
- Count, then cut, calories: try to write down everything you eat for three days and count the calories you consumed. Try websites like calorieking.com to calculate calories. After three days, you will have a better idea of what you really need to cut out of your



diet. Keeping a food/exercise journal is also a proven method to losing weight.

If you've tried these resolutions before with little success, try something new this year. Make it a goal to save more money or take a trip to see a friend in the next year. Remember, you do not have to make a New Year's resolution—it's not the law. However, it is a good time to look into your future and make positive changes for a better year.



Mindy Musselman is a Registered Dietitian and has appointments available for Esse Health patients at our South County and Illinois office locations.

To schedule an appointment with Mindy or for information about Esse Health dietitians in your area, please contact your Esse Health provider.

For more information about Esse Health, please visit us online at www.essehealth.com.