

News to use

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By Megan Swoyer Garbinski

MAKING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS THAT STICK

'Tis the season to make New Year's resolutions, but it takes more than "making" a resolution to fulfill your annual promises, say area therapists, health consultants, dietitians and others.

"It's nice to say that you want to make a resolution, but to get it to stick you need to put some real thought and effort into it," says Bethany Thayer, a registered dietitian at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit.

Teri Racey, a Huntington Woods-based health consultant who blends traditional and non-traditional therapy to help clients achieve greater health and wellness, says the best way to set a resolution is to first be extremely mindful.

"Before setting goals, know yourself," says Racey, who actually teaches a class on this very subject called "Know Yourself for Greater Health." Her company is called Illumined Heart.

“Look at what’s going on in your life without judgment and attachment and get to know and trust your own intuitive guidance,” Racey explains. “Cultivating your wisdom takes time and effort and will help give your resolutions an individuated and more successful outcome.”

Adds Thayer: “Ask yourself questions like, ‘What do I want to accomplish?’ And then think about how you want to do that.”

Losing weight is a common resolution, Thayer says. “You might say, ‘I want to lose weight,’ but be real specific and determine how much and what specific steps you’ll take to get it off.”

In her own life, Thayer’s resolved to live more in the moment.

“I didn’t wait until New Year’s Eve to make that resolution,” she says. “I realized before then that I needed to change because I was wishing my life away, telling myself, ‘I can’t wait until, say, June. Then, I can take a breath.’ Or, ‘In three weeks, I’ll do this.’ So I’m resolved to realize that some days are going to be really busy and some aren’t, but

in every day, I want to live in the moment and enjoy what's going on around me."

From losing weight to being more mindful, from improving your athleticism to signing on to support a cause, New Year's resolutions can be as varied as the colors on a holiday string of lights.

With the countdown to Jan. 1 right around the corner, these resolution tips will help ensure success for 2012.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOURSELF Health consultant Teri Racey suggests taking into account who you are before setting goals.

"For example, if you love to take walks and are an outdoors person, getting a membership to a gym for work-outs may not be the answer for losing weight or exercising more," says Racey. "Personally, I love to walk outside and the idea of being in a gym with stale air is icky to me. Know who you are then make your exercise plan."

BUDDY SYSTEM "Consider setting goals with friends," says Racey. One year, she and her friends set a resolution to lose

weight so they all joined Weight Watchers together. “We had a community goal and that increased our successes.”

STAY POSITIVE One way many people can help themselves is by not putting themselves down during the process of attaining their resolution, which in itself can be a resolution, says Racey. “You could say, ‘For 2012, I won’t trash-talk to myself anymore,’ and then begin an inner dialogue that says, ‘I’m going to encourage myself and be loving toward myself.’”

And if your resolutions don’t work out, don’t put yourself down, just initiate a different path to get there, says Racey.

ONE GREAT GOAL Consider focusing on a single resolution to keep things simple. “One year I decided to improve my conscious contact with God and that was it,” says Racey. “And what a transformative year it was.”

WRITE IT DOWN Felisa Perry, a therapist at New Day Counseling in Troy, suggests writing your goals down. “My teenage son did just that recently and taped them to his bedroom door,” says Perry, whose son is resolved to increase his successes on his high school basketball team.

BE SPECIFIC While writing down your goals, be as specific as you can, says Perry. "Your plan should include baby steps, like 'for the first few weeks, I'll go to the gym just once a week for 30 minutes.' Then increase the frequency and length, little by little."

Adds the Henry Ford Health System's Thayer: "Maybe you start a diet plan by just replacing that 3 p.m. candy bar with a piece of fruit and you tell yourself you're going to do that three to five times a week. Or if your lunches aren't healthy, you can decide to pack a lunch three days a week and then see how it feels, and then maybe add another day."

SKIP THE EXTREME "I believe in the 70/30 rule," says Racey. "If you follow your goal 70 percent of the time, in the long haul you'll do better, than if you followed it 100 percent and then had a bad day. You'll then get down on yourself, go back into your old, comfortable behavior and you've gotten nowhere."

WEIGH IN WITH A PRO "There are three levels to manage when trying to lose weight," says Dr. Paul Ehrmann, D.O. Ehrmann is a health and wellness expert for St. John Providence Health System and is founder of the Family

Health Care Center, a primary care medical group practice located in Royal Oak.

“We focus on weight, fitness and behavior modification,” says Ehrmann. “A medical exam and assessment will help you understand your diet, why you’re eating the things you eat and then find ways to improve it.”

Ehrmann is big on Mediterranean fare and often suggests it to his clients.

“I like to spend time talking with the patients to determine their eating triggers. They know what their problems are and we provide tools for them.”

WHAT’S IN IS OUT “We’re not big on fads,” says Ehrmann. “Dieting is about lifestyle so we get to know our patients first and go from there.”

EASY DOES IT If dieting, go for losing about a pound and a half a week, says Ehrmann.

START MOVING If losing weight is your goal, integrate an exercise plan into your dieting program, says Ehrmann. “We usually start with just dieting and then assess what the

patient needs, exercise-wise. Some need a walking program and some need something more intense so we go over the idea that 3,500 calories equals one pound of weight. If we know what the patient is taking in then we know what he or she needs to burn to lose weight.”

CONSIDER REWARDS Thayer suggests writing down what your rewards will be. “Will you have more energy if you lose weight? Will you feel better?”

TRACK PROGRESS Use a journal to record your activity and progress. If it’s weight loss, maybe create a chart. “This will help you identify when you got off your goals and how to get back on,” says Thayer.

GIVE BACK Many people aim to make their resolutions part of community volunteerism. For Adrienne Lenhoff, president of Novi-based Shazaaam!, a marketing and public relations firm, leaving a community legacy was top of mind last year.

“In 2010 I began taking a real hard look at my life and what type of legacy I would be leaving,” Lenhoff recalls. “I felt like I needed to be doing something that would touch lives and also give me a feeling of purpose.”

With Shazaaam! turning 10 this year, Lenhoff decided it was a good time to launch a new nonprofit program. Two weeks ago, Lenhoff chose 10 non-profits to commemorate 10 years in business with each receiving a gift of \$100,000 in pro bono marketing and PR services. The nomination is open through Dec. 28.