

Healthy resolutions that are easy to keep

The dawn of a new year is a great time to take stock of the year that just passed and set goals for the next 12 months. Resolutions focused on improving personal health are especially popular, and for good reason. Improving one's overall health can have positive implications for years to come.

Even with the best intentions, resolutions have historically proven hard to keep. Simplifying health-based resolutions can lead to a higher success rate and a healthier you.

- Walk more. It is easy to get preoccupied with the "10,000 steps per day" mantra that many people follow and that certain fitness trackers promote. Walking 10,000 steps daily, which equates to roughly five miles per day, is a healthy goal, but it may not be realistic for everyone. Take stock of how many steps you currently take each day,

and then resolve to walk 2,000 more. As your body acclimates to walking more, add another 2,000 steps, continuing to do so until you reach 10,000 steps.

- Learn something new about being healthy. Informed health decisions require gaining a greater understanding of your body. Rely on a reputable source such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to learn more about how to be healthy.

- Spend less time on social media. Staring at your phone or tablet for multiple hours browsing tweets or checking messages might not be the best thing for your physical and mental health. Browsing the internet may take up time that could be better spent engaging in physical activity. According to Dr. Elia Abi-Jaoude, a staff psychiatrist at the Hospital for Sick Children and Toronto Western Hospital, various studies

have shown how excessive social media usage can adversely affect relationships, sense of self, sleep, academic performance, and emotional well-being.

- Eat more whole foods. Whole foods, including vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and fish, contain various nutrients the body needs to function at peak capacity. These foods may help reduce the risk of many diseases and help people maintain healthy body weights. Start slowly by introducing a new whole food to your diet each day. A gradual approach is more manageable than going on a drastic diet.

- Avoid sweetened beverages. You are what you eat, but also what you drink. A report published in 2006 in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, particularly carbonated soft drinks, may be a key

contributor in the epidemic of overweight and obesity. Skip sweetened beverages (even fruit juices can be unhealthy if consumed in excess) and opt for more water or unsweetened teas.

- Find a physical activity you like. Rather than resolving to join the gym or signing up for a 5K because it's what everyone is doing, find a physical activity you truly enjoy and aim to do it a few times a week. Maybe it's a sport like tennis or recreational cycling with the family. But if the idea of a gym membership excites you, then by all means sign up.

Avoid restrictive health and wellness resolutions that can be unsustainable. By downsizing expectations and taking small steps en route to your goals, you may be more motivated to stay the course and realize your resolutions.



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for 2021

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Auld Lang Syne

Though they might not realize it, New Year's Eve celebrants are honoring a world-renowned Scottish poet and lyricist each time they sing along to "Auld Lang Syne" as the clock strikes 12 midnight and the calendar turns from one year to the next. Robert Burns wrote "Auld Lang Syne" in 1788 and translations regarding what the phrase means vary. Burns wrote the poem in the Scots language, which is a little known language spoken in Scotland and parts of Ulster in Ireland. But the phrase is now widely translated as "times long past," which may explain why it has become the unofficial anthem of New Year's Eve.

For auld lang syne,
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And surely you'll buy your pint cup!
And surely I'll buy mine!

And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We two have run about the slopes,
And picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
Since auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We two have paddled in the stream,
From morning sun till dine;
But seas between us broad have roared

Since auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

Lyrics by Robert Burns
Lyrics courtesy of Britannica.com

"Auld Lang Syne"

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And old lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,

Did you know?

Celebrating the new year on DECEMBER 31 is a relatively recent phenomenon. The calendar as we know it today has evolved several times and months have gone by different names. On the early Roman calendar, March was the first month of the 10-month calendar. That is why the last four months of the year have prefixes that coordinate with the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth numerals. King Numa Pompilius reformed the calendar around 700 BCE by adding the months of January and February to the original 10 months. But the calendar still required some additional tweaking to be more aligned with the seasons. In 46 B.C., Julius Caesar introduced a solar-based calendar that was an improvement on the ancient Roman one, which was lunar-based. During this time, the month of Quintilis was renamed July in honor of Julius Caesar and Sextilis was renamed August in honor of Augustus. Shortly after the introduction of the solar calendar, the beginning of the year was moved from March 1 to DECEMBER 31.

10, 9, 8...

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