

Wellness Resolution Tips, By MaryBeth Skoch

What is the best way to determine or set a wellness resolution?

When it comes to determining your [wellness resolution], it is wise to begin by reflecting on what your values are for the year ahead. Where do you see yourself a year from now? What changes feel right? By identifying what your values are, you can align your behavioral changes accordingly. Putting heart into your resolutions, allows you connect to them on a deeper level and determines what is most meaningful to you as you being another new year. This also makes your resolutions more likely to stick!

“Get Skinny,” “Go to the Gym” or “Don’t Eat Carbs” seem like resolutions people won’t be able to keep.

How do you make your end goal into an attainable resolution?

Often times a resolution, particularly around the new year, can feel cliché, or gimmicky, and rather lacking personalization. A helpful technique to make your end goal into an attainable resolution is to use visualization. The more you can connect to what it will feel like, to be living your resolution, you have a better chance of actually making it a reality! VeraVia clients use visualization techniques to achieve their health and wellness goals. Resolutions that are restrictive, depriving, or reductive tend have a harder time sticking or fail to stick at all. Best to start with a more global, expansive resolution that truly connects to your personal meaning and values, and then pinpoint resolutions from there. This is much more likely to lead to sustainable results!

We’ve heard that in order to keep a resolution, you need to form a habit, which means 21 days of continuous follow-through. Are there other techniques to staying on track?

If you are coming from a value driven place, your resolutions are more likely to be salient and congruent with your beliefs and will have a positive effect on your motivation! It’s also helpful to keep in mind that it’s going to take considerable effort. Change requires action and the first three times we perform a new behavior or habit, will feel more effortful, than the next three. I always remind clients of this, so they can acknowledge this fact during the process. Be patient with yourself and encourage yourself with praise, and positive affirmations. Be sure to celebrate the changes you are accomplishing along the way!

By February, some of our resolutions have already slipped. What do you do when you've fallen off the wagon?

At VeraVia, we highlight that self-criticism is not an effective motivator to change. I encourage clients to use self-compassion and mindfulness when confronted with struggle. Therefore, if you do happen to “fall off the wagon”, or slip up on your New Year’s Resolution by the time you’re reading this article, keep in mind that criticizing yourself is not going to help you maintain your course. If this happens, acknowledge and accept that it has occurred. Reframe it as an invitation to revisit and re-evaluate your resolutions and an opportunity to reflect on why this slip occurred, doing so without criticism or judgment.

Actively chose to recommit to your resolutions again, and absolutely, tweak them as needed if you’re discovering things about yourself along the way. Health is more than just about the physical, but we also know that we should have an annual visit with our doctor to make sure we’re on the right path.

What are some critical questions to ask our physician during our visit to make sure we are setting a path to whole wellness?

About two weeks before your annual visit, begin to jot down a list of questions you may have for your physician. This is extremely helpful during an often quick visit! Too often patients leave having not remembered to ask the questions they really wanted to. Before going into the appointment, do consider how your sleep, energy level, eating habits, and exercise routines have changed or fluctuated since your last visit. This can help to highlight what topics to address with your physician. Also consider how you’ve responded to stress over the past year, reflect on your interpersonal relationships, and mental health to make sure you are setting on a path to whole wellness. Personally assessing yourself mind, body, and spirit will help to identify critical questions or topics to share with your physician.

Anything else you'd like to add?

The new year can be a great time to embrace new behaviors! Consider making a list of things you “haven’t had time for”, or have “always wanted to try...”. Check out local opportunities to get involved in those activities. It doesn’t have to be a long commitment, but you might find yourself loving the dance class you thought you could never fit in during the week, or the guitar lessons that seemed lost long ago, or the foreign language that you always wanted to learn... Along the way you may discover and reignite passions that can help to fuel you towards your resolutions and allow them to grow even more!