

HOW TO KEEP YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

This article is from DASH for Health, which is an online nutrition and weight loss program that is FREE to all Boston University employees. DASH for Health was developed by physicians at BU and the Boston Medical Center, and it has been ranked the #1 Overall Diet by US News & World Report for 7 years in a row!

Get started today! To enroll, click [here](#) for more information and to get started.



More than half of Americans make New Year's resolutions. And more than half of those have given up on their resolutions by the end of January. If you've made a resolution this year to eat better, lose weight, or exercise more, DASH for Health has a few suggestions to help you stick with your resolutions till you meet your goal.

Here are the most common New Year's resolutions people made last year. But chances are these will be the top five this year too.

- 1 Lose Weight
- 2 Getting Organized
- 3 Spend Less, Save More
- 4 Enjoy Life to the Fullest
- 5 Staying Fit and Healthy

In our view, three of these are goals that the DASH for Health program is designed to help you accomplish (losing weight, staying fit and healthy, and living life to the fullest (by being trim, fit, and healthy:)). Let's see how we can help you meet these goals.

About goal setting

The Rolling Stones said it most clearly, "You **don't** always **get** what you **wahhant**." But most of us have learned through personal experience that there is a big difference between wanting something and getting it – especially if what you want involves changing entrenched behaviors. This is where "goal-setting" is key.

Goal setting is the process by which you decide a goal that you want to achieve and then identify all the little steps you need to take to get there. Effective goal-setting increases the likelihood you will be successful in the pursuit of your goals.

Breaking it down

Whether we realize it or not, most of us participate in goal-setting every day to accomplish our short-term daily goals (doing the laundry, cooking dinner, cleaning the house, etc.). Fulfilling long-term goals is a little different so it is important and instructive to break this down into a four-step process:

1. You decide what your long-term goals are
2. You break these long-term goals down into the short-term goals you must achieve to reach the long term goals.
3. You identify possible obstacles and ways to overcome them
4. You make action plans to move you toward the short term goals and identify **situations** and **people** who will help you along.



The long and the short of it

The key to moving toward your stated long-term goal is to develop short-term goals. For example, if your long-term goal is to exercise four times each week for the next month, an appropriate short-term goal is to arrange to meet a friend for a jog tomorrow at 7:00. Then set up a series of short-term steps several times each week to meet your long-term goal. See the list below for some possible short-term goals that you might set to help you move toward your long-term goal. Choose a few from the list or write down your own.. Remember to choose something that you can realistically achieve in a short time frame—within a few days is ideal. For each short term goal, further define the goal by adding specifics. In the examples below, we suggest doing certain tasks on certain days—that makes the goal more specific. Or, in the case of watching food portions, because many people are prone to overeating at night, we'll start by focusing on dinner.

- Tomorrow I will record what I eat today on the DASH food questionnaire
- Watch my food portions by measuring at dinner
- Bring my own lunch to work
- Sign up for Tuesday night aerobics class
- Read calorie and fat information on food labels
- Weigh myself every Monday and enter my weight on the [Your Stuff](#) page.

Obstacle raised

What about obstacles? The expression, “It’s simple, but not easy,” certainly applies to many important goals. The reason it’s not easy is that we frequently experience or create barriers to achieving our goals. It’s important to think ahead of time what the obstacles to achieving your goals have been in the past, and come up with solutions to overcoming those barriers.

- **Problem:** I don't have time to get to Tuesday aerobics class.
- **Solution:** Think about how important exercise is to meeting your weight loss goal. Check your schedule and re-arrange things to protect that Tuesday time.
- **Problem:** I keep forgetting to measure my dinner portions.
- **Solution:** Set up reminders for yourself that will be there at just the right time. Set the alarm on your phone or put sticky notes on the fridge.

Finding people who will support you is also critical to your success of reaching your goals. Does your family know of your plan of actions toward your goals? Can you discuss your lack of time with your spouse or a friend to see if he/she can help you find a solution?

Knowing how to set goals and achieve them empowers you to choose where you want to go in life. Now take a minute to write down some short-term goals for your New Year's resolutions. If you don't have time now, let your first short-term goal be to do it before today ends!!



Take Advantage of DASH for Health Today!

DASH for Health is FREE to all Boston University employees and up to three of their adult household members.

To learn more and enroll, click [here](#).