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2011 Is Your Year! : 5 Easy Steps to Get You Started on Keeping Those New Years Resolutions:

It is the start of a New Year! This is the time most of us make our New Year's Resolutions, with better health being one of the top resolutions. Unfortunately, it is well known that most of us have the best of intentions on the 1st, but by the 15th our "resolution" become another "attempted" habit change.

Don't worry.... it's hard to change our old habits and adopt a new, healthier lifestyle. Research suggests it takes about 3 months to form a better habit.

The mistake many of us make is that we try to change too many things to quickly, or we make unrealistic resolutions. There is an easier, more effective way to make **SMALL** changes that can have **BIG** results.

I suggest starting with 5 small achievable lifestyle changes over the next 15 days. During the next 15 days, follow these simple suggestions. At the end of the 15 days, you may be surprised at how easy it was to make these small changes and how you can easily continue most of them. By starting small, you are on your way to adopting healthy lifestyle changes that can slowly develop into more permanent lifestyle habits. The result is losing a few pounds, increased energy, better stress management, and a more healthy and confident YOU! Make 2011 your year!!

Researchers at a University in England followed 2,000 people who made a two-week resolution. The study found that women were less resilient at sticking to resolutions, with just 30% being successful in keeping to their healthy change compared to 37% of men who took part. New Year's resolutions fail because people try to do too much too soon. They want to have Halle Barry's body in a month

***The information provided is not intended to diagnose or treat any health condition. Please consult with your doctor or naturopathic doctor before starting any new supplement program as they may have interactions with certain medications. ***



#1: Nutrition

The first place to start on a healthier new YOU is to make simple nutritional changes.

1. Swap white flour products for whole grain products. If it is white, don't eat it! That includes all products made of white flour like muffins, cookies, donuts, etc. Choose sweet potato or yams instead of white potato. Choose brown rice over white rice. Simple changes can have huge results!
2. Avoid refined sugar. You can do this for 15 days! Choose healthy sugars such as Agave Nectar, pure maple syrup or Stevia. Avoid sugar replacements like Splenda, NutraSweet, Sweet'N'Low and Equal. These nasty replacements have been linked to problems such as cancer, migraines, depression, birth defects, seizures, behavior changes, anemia, sexual dysfunction, thyroid dysfunction, and more. For a sugary snack choose dark chocolate (greater than 70% cocoa) and eat no more than 2 squares a day.
3. NEVER skip breakfast. Eating foods high in energy in the morning sets our metabolism all day to burn calories. Breakfast ideas include no sugar added oatmeal, eggs, high fiber cereals, fruit with plain yogurt, apple with almond butter.
4. For lunch and dinner $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate should be vegetables. Choose bright colored vegetables and dark green leafy vegetables. Avoid creamy dressings which are usually high in fat. Choose oil based dressings low in sugar. Olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressings are great!
5. Keep a 3-4 day **diet log** of what you eat and how much you are exercising before starting the 15 day program. Then keep a log during the 15 days. By seeing exactly what you eat, you can identify where empty calories are coming from and easily avoid these calorie dense foods (do you really need that donut at lunch time?) When you see the changes you have made, be proud of them and use them to motivate you to continue making these changes.



#2: Water

Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. Have water available throughout the day in a stainless steel or glass container. Sip slowly during the day. Your goal should be at least 1 liter the first week, then up to 2 liters the next week. Avoid all soft drinks, including diet soft drinks. Avoid fruit juices too. If you must, dilute 1/3 fruit juice with 2/3 water in the beginning. However, quickly work towards drinking only pure, filtered water.

A study at the University of Texas found people who drink diet soft drinks actually gain weight: a 41% increase in risk of being overweight for every can of diet soft drink a person consumes each day. Some soft drink studies do suggest that diet drinks stimulate appetite.

These researchers looked at seven to eight years of data on 1,550 Mexican-American and non-Hispanic white Americans aged 25 to 64. Of the 622 study participants who were of normal weight at the beginning of the study, about a third became overweight or obese.

For regular soft-drink drinkers, the risk of becoming overweight or obese was:

- 26% for up to 1/2 can each day
- 30.4% for 1/2 to one can each day
- 32.8% for 1 to 2 cans each day
- 47.2% for more than 2 cans each day.

For diet soft-drink drinkers, the risk of becoming overweight or obese was:

- 36.5% for up to 1/2 can each day
- 37.5% for 1/2 to one can each day
- 54.5% for 1 to 2 cans each day
- 57.1% for more than 2 cans each day.

For each can of diet soft drink consumed each day, a person's risk of obesity went up 41%.

Take home message: DON'T DRINK SODAS!!!



#3: Exercise

Exercise doesn't have to be at the gym. Remember, small changes can have big results! If you don't exercise regularly, make it a goal to walk at least 30 min every day. Walking the dog, using the stairs at work, park a little further away, bike ride; it all counts. According to the American Heart Association, just 30 min of brisk walking can significantly reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. For those of you used to exercising, this may be a great time to get a personal trainer to develop a fresh new program for you. I personally recommend Shazparoo Fitness at www.shazparoo.com.

Here is a quick test to determine your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Measure the circumference of your hips at the widest part of your buttocks. Then measure your waist at its smallest part. Divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement to produce your waist to hip ratio. For example, if your waist is 28in, and your hips 34in, your ratio is 0.8. If your ratio is greater than 0.85, you are more likely to suffer from diabetes, high blood pressure and heart problems. A ratio greater is 1.0 is very unhealthy. The good news is that a balanced diet and 30 min of exercise a day can significantly reduce your risk of a cardiovascular event. This may be a great motivator!

Get a pedometer and monitor how many steps you take on an average day. Then challenge yourself to increase your number of steps each day. Eventually aim for 10,000 steps per day. You can do this! It's easier than it sounds ☺

#4: Supplements

If you have ever been to a health store, I am sure you have been overwhelmed with all the different supplements available. My patients ask me all the time, what are the main supplements I would recommend for general health support? You don't need to take a basket of pills everyday. The basic supplements I recommend to support overall health, immune system, detoxification and stress management include:

1. A high quality multivitamin/ mineral formula with no added sugar, colorings or preservatives. Make sure it contains all the B Vitamins!
2. A high quality fish oil to support our brain and body with essential fatty acids. Make sure the oils are clean of all toxic metals or pesticide residues.



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3. A high quality supplement containing Ginseng. Choose one that is not overly processed. Ginseng is excellent for helping the body deal with stress, supporting the immune system, improving energy and improving memory. I like Panax Ginseng, or Korean Ginseng, for its adrenal supportive benefits.

4. For those of us who drank a little too much alcohol over the holiday season, I recommend milk thistle. The liver has a remarkable capacity to regenerate itself. However, each time it filters alcohol, some liver cells die. Milk thistle is great for helping our liver cells regenerate.

These are the basics, however many of us have health conditions that require additional supplemental support. For example, if you have diabetes, heart disease, or a thyroid condition, your body requires other vitamins/minerals to support it. It is best to see a Naturopathic Doctor who can assess your body's vitamin needs and develop a customized program for you. We have many great doctors at Vitalia Health Care, to help you find the right nutritional program for you!

#5: Stress management

Managing stress in your life is one of the best ways to stay healthy, keep a positive outlook and focus on keeping your resolutions. A stressed out body doesn't work well. Start with the commitment that you will sleep at least 7 hours a night. You will feel refreshed and ready to start your day. Maintain this for 15 days and notice how you feel the next day.

Take 15 min a day for "You Time". Relax and ground yourself. Listen to a relaxing tape, do a breathing exercise, go for a walk. Find 15 min out of 24 hours for you. Your body will love you for this! This is an easy first step to managing stress better.

Lastly, make the commitment that you will do 1 thing a week for yourself. Pamper yourself with a massage. Finish that great book. Finish that hobby you started a long time ago. Honor yourself with "you" time!



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I hope you can use this 15 day plan to jumpstart your resolutions to good health, energy, better stress management and a more confident YOU! This is a basic plan that almost anyone can follow. However, I always recommend an individualized plan as no two people are the same. We at Vitalia Health Care can assess your individual health needs using state of the art diagnostic tools and years of clinical expertise. We can then customize a "jump start to the New Year" program specific for you. Call us today at 604-732-3422 to book your appointment. Make this your year!!!!!!

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