

January 2023

1/3/23: 5 New Year's Resolutions Anyone Can Keep

It's that time of year again- time where you have the best of intentions and set out to make big changes in the new year! But if you're like me and most other Americans, your motivation and success may begin to wane just a short time into the new year. Why do so many of us fail? The biggest mistake, perhaps, is being too ambitious. I'm Clarissa Moon here with 5 suggestions for some easy-to-implement resolutions.

1. Drink more water
 - a. Proper hydration has all kinds of health benefits including digestion function and spinal cord protection. Most adults should aim to get at least 64 ounces a day.
2. Eat good fat
 - a. Not all fat is created equal. In fact, some fats have many health benefits. Look for unsaturated fats found in nuts, fish and certain oils.
3. Get up and walk.
 - a. Have you heard that sitting is the new smoking? A sedentary lifestyle is associated with many health concerns, so get up and move as much as you can! Even just ten minutes a day can make a big difference.
4. De-stress daily.
 - a. Chronic stress is associated with many short- and long-term health problems. Learn how to manage your stress and do what works for you whether it's walking, meditating or playing music.
5. Stay positive.
 - a. Life is a roller coaster and research shows that those who look on the bright side can bounce back better and have improved health overall.

There you have it, 5 resolutions that are a sure way to improve your health and be somewhat easy to implement! For more information visit [healthpossible.org](https://www.healthpossible.org) or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://www.healthpossible.org/2020/03/five-healthy-new-years-resolutions-anyone-can-keep/>

1/9/22: Keep Dreaming

Wouldn't it be nice if we humans could hibernate over the winter with our bear friends? I know I've certainly dreamt of it. While it may not be physically possible, one can (and should- in a way) keep dreaming. Problem Sleepiness is a term that describes when a person's sleepiness interferes with daily life and their ability to function.

I'm Clarissa Moon here with more info on why problem sleepiness is aptly named and why you should take note.

1. Sleep deficiency can interfere with learning, focusing, decision-making, remembering things, managing emotion, and more. It can also lead to long-term health problems like heart disease.
2. How do I know if I am sleep deficient? A few tell-tale signs include tiredness and not feeling refreshed upon waking. You might be sleep deficient if you feel like you could doze off while:
 - a. Reading or watching TV
 - b. Sitting in traffic
 - c. Sitting in a public place or meeting
3. Can children have it?
 - a. YES! Some symptoms can differ between children and adults, however. For example, sleepy children can actually be overactive. Other symptoms are similar including anger, moodiness, depression or lack of motivation.
4. Mental health benefits
 - a. Problems with sleep can interfere with cognition and emotions, which could then contribute to feelings of self-worth, depression, social problems and more.
5. Physical health benefits
 - a. Sleep helps repair your heart and blood vessels, regulates hormones and insulin, fight germs and more!
6. Daytime performance and safety- I won't rehash some of the cognitive processes impacted by sleep, but will add that even after losing 1-2 hours of sleep a night for several nights, your ability to function suffers as if you haven't slept at all for a day or two.

As you can see, sleep is not something to mess with. So when I tell you to keep dreaming, I mean it! For more information on sleep and more, visit [nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov) or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/sleep-deprivation/health-effects>

1/16/23: How To: Read a Nutrition Facts Label

Did you know the nutrition facts label has only been required on food and beverage packaging since 1990? While this information is intended to be helpful and informative, it can only do its job when we know how to read it and use the information as consumers. I'm Clarissa Moon here to break it down for you.

1. Let's start from the beginning, a very good place to start! Up first is serving size- this is set by the FDA and reflects the amount that a person normally consumes. It is NOT a recommendation for how much you should eat or drink. If you consume more or less of the product, the amount of calories and nutrients consumed will also change.

2. Next up, in big bold letters, is the calories! This shows how many calories (or how much energy) the food provides in each serving.
3. The next section highlights information about macronutrients and micronutrients in each serving. These can be both healthy nutrients like fiber and the bad guys like saturated fats, so look closely!
 - a. Limit: sat fat, sodium and added sugars
 - b. Encourage: fiber and vitamins
4. Last but not least is the percent daily value. This is listed on the far right side of the label. To help break this down, use the 5/20 rule. If you see a food that contains 5% or less of a nutrient, it's considered LOW. If there is a food with 20% DV or more, it's considered HIGH.

I hope these quick tips helped you learn something new or boosted your confidence with looking at the label! For more info, visit foodinsight.org or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://foodinsight.org/how-to-read-a-nutrition-facts-label/>

1/23/23: Work the Insomnia Out

Working out is good for both body and mind, but did you know it can also help you get a good night's sleep? While there is solid evidence that exercise can help you fall asleep more quickly and improve sleep quality, there is still some debate about what time of day you should exercise. I'm Clarissa Moon here to break it down for you.

What's the fuss all about, how does working out affect the mind? Well, aerobic exercise causes the body to release endorphins. These happy little chemicals can create a level of activity in the brain that keeps some people awake. Waiting 1-2 hours after exercise gives the brain time to wind down, plus time for the endorphins to wash away.

Exercise also raises your core body temperature. This elevation in temp signals the body clock that it's time to be awake. However, the body temp will start to decline after about 30-90 minutes, which helps facilitate sleepiness.

What's the bottom line? Doctors, and this extension agent, will always suggest that you exercise, but the time to do it is not scripted. So, get to know your body and what works for you. Some people may not have a problem exercising right before bed.

I hope you are all pumped up now to sweat the insomnia away! For more info, visit hopkinsmedicine.org or panola.agrilife.org

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/exercising-for-better-sleep>

1/30/23: Body-Weight Exercises

All exercise is beneficial, but each kind has its own pros and cons depending on you and your lifestyle. Body-weight exercise is one that checks a lot of boxes, no matter who you are, though. I'm Clarissa Moon here to explain it all.

Perhaps the biggest advantage to body-weight exercising is convenience. You can do it anytime, anywhere. Seriously, I can't think of a place where you *couldn't* do body-weight exercises but can only think of situations where it might be socially awkward.

No need to buy any fancy equipment or set up a home gym. You don't even need to set aside a lot of time to get a little workout in.

Some may be wondering how effective these exercises can be. And to those I say, why don't you do 50 burpees for me without getting your heart rate up or breaking a sweat. Seriously though, one study found participants who did body-weight exercises performed better in 7 of 9 health parameters throughout the study.

Other advantages include the ability to modify exercises to your fitness level and providing practical, functional fitness.

So next time you're making excuses not to go to the gym or get outside and walk, drop and give me 20!

For more information, visit health.harvard.edu or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/exercise-and-fitness/the-advantages-of-body-weight-exercise>