

# Lifestyle Tips



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## Fit vs. Fat Acting on your New Year's Resolutions!



With the New Year, come New Year's resolutions. Many people put on a few extra pounds over the holiday season, and many see the New Year as a new opportunity to lose weight. Adding more physical activity into your routine may be part of your plan to get slim:

physical activity has an important role to play in maintaining a healthy body weight, but that's not the whole picture! Being physically active is important regardless of your weight—so, instead of making a deal with your scale this New Year, how about making a deal with yourself to get active?

We all know someone whose only physical activity is pushing the buttons on the TV remote control, yet remains slim—and someone else who has run marathons, but may look like he or she could lose a few pounds. Based on appearances alone, most people think the thin couch potato is healthier than the heavy marathon runner, but research says it's not so! No matter what a person weighs, regular physical activity reduces the risk of over 25 chronic conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, breast cancer, colon cancer, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. No matter how much you weigh, it is important to get 30, and preferably 60, minutes of physical activity a day.

Make increasing physical activity your New Year's resolution. Here are some great ideas to help you stay on that path. Keep a diary or calendar of your physical activity, so you can track and measure your improvement—and don't forget to add small, 10-minute bouts, like walking to the store or shovelling the driveway. By recording your activity, you can see increases over time and progress towards your goals.



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When you're setting a goal—which is what a New Year's resolution is—it's a great idea to make it a SMART goal:

**S is for specific** – Clearly define what you want to accomplish. Instead of setting a goal to “be active,” set a specific goal to “walk 30 minutes, four times a week.”

**M is for measurable** – If you can't measure your goal, you will never know if you have reached it. Make your goal a specific number, like minutes walked or number of sit-ups, so you can see your progress.

**A is for attainable** – Setting a goal that is out of reach may discourage you. However, setting a goal that is a stretch, but within reach, will motivate you to make the commitment and help you find the strength to attain it.

**R is for relevant** – This means that the goal has to work within your lifestyle and your own interests. If you are not a morning person, don't try to reinvent yourself by planning to exercise before work. Make sure you choose an activity you enjoy.

**T is for time-bound** – Setting a timeframe for your goal will provide you with clear target to work towards and encourage you to get started right away. If your goal is to run a 10k on a certain date, you will be less likely to put it off.

Using SMART goals will help stay on track towards a healthier, more active lifestyle. Focusing on increasing physical activity instead of just losing weight means that your New Year can be less about a new body, and more about a whole new you!

