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# Wellness Works

STAY HEALTHY AND WELL WITH INFORMATION FROM CIS BENEFITS!

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## DON'T KEEP YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

**Yes, you read that right.** This New Year's Eve, you'll join millions of people—including your colleagues and friends—who commit to making their lives better. For most of us, these yearly resolutions revolve around the famous weight loss goal. This is the year you'll triple-down on your efforts to eat healthier and hit the gym regularly. Or maybe your goal will be to quit smoking or get out of debt.

The premise is that at the stroke of midnight on Dec. 31, you'll be ready to do what it takes to reach your goal. Of course, that premise is fundamentally flawed. Major changes like the ones described above require careful planning and execution to be successful.

So, forget the New Year, and instead develop healthy habits that will create long-term success. Here, from your friends at CIS Benefits, are some tips to be at your best in 2017:

**Setting a limit**—You can't expect to change everything all at one time. If you have a goal to lose weight and exercise more, you need to define them by making them specific. For example, "I commit to walk during the lunch hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Susan."

**Making an action plan**—Write down your goals, such as, "I'm going to eliminate one cigarette a day for one week and two cigarettes a day for another week. On Jan. 20 at noon, I will discard any remaining cigarettes."

One study showed that only 8 percent of people who make resolutions succeed in keeping them. So how long do the resolutions last? Surprisingly, 75 percent of resolutions will be continued through the entire first week of January, but only about 46 percent make it past six months. Don't make a resolution for the whole year. Resolutions only become permanent when they start out with a short-term goal. Set smaller, attainable goals, with the bigger picture in mind. This lessens frustration and increases success. Research backs this up—scientists have found that it takes somewhere between 21 and 66 days for a habit to take root in a person's life. For those covered by a CIS medical plan, CIS Benefits Wellness Resources can help keep you on track to reach your goals, with programs for healthy eating, weight management, and much more. Please visit [www.cisbenefits.org](http://www.cisbenefits.org) (login required) and click on the Healthy Benefits & Wellness tab for more details.

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**Avoiding triggers**—There are obvious triggers, like all-you-can-eat buffets when you're dieting. But resolving to become healthier doesn't mean isolating yourself. Attend a support group centered on your goal—whether its weight loss, smoking cessation, alcohol abstinence or something else. Or enlist a pal in a friendly competition centered around steps on a pedometer.

**Quitting smoking**—Speak to your doctor about medications that decrease nicotine cravings, such as Wellbutrin or Chantix. Consider a step-down method and set a stop-date to throw out every cigarette in the house.

**Stopping or decreasing alcohol consumption**—For non-dependent folks who want to limit alcohol for health reasons, enlist the help of a support network. However, if you've been indulging in multiple drinks daily for years, seek medical help.

**Losing weight**—Keep expectations in check: losing one pound a week is considered a safe rate. Drink a glass of water 15 minutes before meals to trick your stomach into feeling full. Arrange your meal on a salad plate and don't eat more than one plate of food at a sitting.

**Exercising more**—Start twice a week, 10 minutes a day or do what you can.

**Getting more sleep**—Set a consistent bedtime and eliminate screen time 30 minutes before lights-out. Daytime exercise induces better quality sleep.

**Flossing teeth**—Set an alarm on your phone. If it goes off before bedtime and you haven't brushed and flossed, head to the bathroom. Or, keep floss sticks in your car and floss at red lights.

True life change takes root when goals are short-term, simple, written down, and made in community. Wishing you and yours a 2017 filled with lasting life change!

If your New Year's resolution is "Get healthy and lose 30 pounds in 2017," you're setting yourself up for failure. Instead, if you make your goal, "Workout with my spouse/dog/friend four days a week for six weeks," you'll likely keep that resolution. Become physically, emotionally and mentally aware of your inner state as each external event happens, moment-by-moment, rather than living in the past or future. Finally, don't take yourself so seriously. Have fun and laugh at yourself when you slip, but don't let the slip hold you back from working at your goal.

