



# **New Year's Resolutions - How Are You Doing With Your Goals?**

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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At the beginning of each year, individuals often follow the tradition of declaring resolutions. Some may state that they plan to lose weight, save money, travel, quit smoking or resolve a personal issue within the following twelve months. Those who own gyms are aware, however, that their January sales of memberships will fill the parking lots and crowd the facilities for only a short period of time. In fact, they actually count on the fact that members will start their programs with passion that dies quickly within weeks. By February, many who are contracted to pay for a year are absent from the property.

People who claim that they will stop smoking frequently find that their goal is not met on a long-term basis and return to the habit. Others reach December without any more savings than they had the previous year.

There are a number of things that can be done to ensure that resolutions are not just words.

1. Ensure that you are serious about the resolution and are willing to "pay the price" that it will require. Wishing doesn't make it so and many goals require organization, planning and effort. If the goal was "easy" you would likely have achieved it already.
2. Plan a goal that is achievable. It may not be easy to save \$10,000.00 considering your income whereas saving \$1,200.00 may be possible. Choose a goal that will stretch you but not be so lofty that you either give up or set yourself up for failure.
3. Clearly outline something that is measurable. Stating "I want to be thin" is not as clear as saying "I want to lose twelve pounds this year".
4. Pick something that is realistic. Claiming that you want to be a physician this year is not feasible if you haven't completed any university training.
5. Break the big goal down into smaller pieces. Plan a trip by listing all the things that need to be done before you take off and then assign target dates for completion.
6. Seek out support and accountability sources. Having a walking partner may keep you exercising on the days that you feel like staying indoors. Working with a financial planner will likely help you stay on track - even moreso if you have automatic debits from your chequing account on a regular basis.
7. Begin. All the planning in the world will not be effective without action.
8. Celebrate your accomplishments on a regular basis. Reviewing and acknowledging your progress on a weekly basis will not only help you make adjustments to improve your plan but also allow you to enjoy the progress being made.

Most important, is probably the fact that you don't need to wait until New Year's to make resolutions. Any day of the year offers a new beginning for you to decide to make a positive change in your life!