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**Keep those resolutions inch by inch**

By Nanci Hellmich

People often make New Year's resolutions to lose weight. That goal is easier to accomplish if it's broken down in steps. USA TODAY asked several nutritionists who work with overweight patients to offer specific ways to slim down in 2007.

Dawn Jackson Blatner

Registered dietitian at Northwestern Memorial Hospital Wellness Institute in Chicago

- Write your resolutions down on paper and keep them in a prominent place. Seeing your goals written down will definitely help keep you on track and mindful. Consider putting them up as your screen saver.
- Make your resolution specific. Instead of saying "I will eat healthier," say: "I will eat at least one piece of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables each day."
- Visit a grocery store once a week. You can eat only as healthfully as your last trip to the grocery store. Do a cart check before you get in line. About 50% of your cart should be produce.
- Keep the fruits and vegetables at eye level in your fridge. If you open your fridge and see colorful veggies, you will be more likely to reach in and grab them.
- Talk to yourself before you eat anything. Ask yourself, "Why am I eating this?" Many times you may find you are eating because you are bored, thirsty, frustrated, tense or tired. If you aren't eating because you are hungry ... try to do something else.

Keith Ayob

Associate professor of pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York

- Think slow and steady instead of fast and furious. Consider where you want to be next New Year's Eve instead of what you'll weigh at the end of the week.
- Stop having a lunch hour; instead have a lunch half-hour. Eat for 30 minutes and go for a walk for 30 minutes. Better still, go walking first and pick up a healthy salad on the way back. You'll feel way better and you'll have burned off a good 150 calories before you even sit down to eat.

- Make peace with food. Allow yourself 100 to 200 calories a day for foods you really enjoy. Good eating is about allowing some indulgences. It's not about constant suffering and deprivation.

- Change the way you think of exercise. Don't think of it as a chore; instead think of it as "me time." No kids, no cellphones or bosses to nag you. It's just you exercising and listening to music or watching TV.

- If you're often ravenous after work, eat a piece of fruit or other healthy snack on the way home. That way you're less likely to eat something fattening once you get home.

### **Lisa Young**

**Nutrition professor at New York University and author of *The Portion Teller Plan***

- Get salad dressing on the side. Restaurants usually put about ¼ cup (4 tablespoons) of dressing on a salad, which is much too much. Best to stick with 1 to 2 tablespoons. Dip your fork into the dressing and then into the salad.

- Pick and choose your treats carefully. Select what you love, and skip what you can do without. It is OK to have treats on occasion, but not at every meal.

- Use visuals to help you judge reasonable-size portions. Use your hand as a guide. Three ounces of meat is about the size of a palm; a cup of rice or pasta is about the size of a fist.

- Eat fruit instead of drinking fruit juice. You will get fiber, it takes longer to eat, and you will feel more satisfied.

### **Bonnie Taub-Dix**

**Registered dietitian in private practice in New York City and national spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association**

- Make a list of things you'd like to change. Then each month, select one or two items on your list and try to make those changes. "If you try to do everything at once in January, you'll become overwhelmed and end up eating a couple of boxes of chocolates by Valentine's Day," she says.

- In January, you might try to eat smaller portions and take an extra 20-minute walk every day.

- In February, you could cut down on alcoholic drinks and have a salad or vegetable at both lunch and dinner.

- In March, you could switch from mayonnaise to mustard on your sandwiches and start lifting weights.

- At the first of every month, try on an article of clothing that's a little snug. Then try it on again at the end of the month. It's rewarding to see the changes from the improvements in diet and exercise, even if they are subtle.

Claudia Gonzalez

Registered dietitian in Miami and co-author of *Gordito Doesn't Mean Healthy: What Every Latina Mother Needs to Know to Raise Fit, Happy, Healthy Kids*

- Aim to lose 1 to 2 pounds a month. In a year, you'll be 12 to 24 pounds lighter.

- Drink a glass of skim or 1% milk each day. It'll keep your bones strong while you're losing weight.

- Consider snacking on an ounce of almonds. They have the same protein as meats and are great for your heart.

- Don't use the fact that you are exercising as an excuse to eat more.

- Write your goals down and read them regularly.

- Don't give up. Remember that even if you fail to lose much weight, holding your own is better than gaining.