

04 January 2016

Keeping your New Year's resolutions on track

For many people, being active and eating healthy are common New Year's resolutions. Whatever the case, it is still early in 2016 and there's plenty of time to achieve your goals.

South Western Sydney Local Health District's Health Promotion Service Acting Director Balwinder Sidhu said you're more likely to improve your chances of keeping your New Year's resolutions by committing to a concrete plan.

"Writing down your goals will help concrete your intentions firmly in your memory and also make it harder to postpone the good habits," Ms Sidhu said.

While it may be hard to keep up the enthusiasm months after you've toasted under the stars and fireworks, Ms Sidhu said it's not impossible.

"New Year's resolutions often fall apart because people fall back into their old habits and cannot stick to their new choices. This year, start with one worthy resolution and stick with it instead of making more than one and breaking them all," she said.

While this is easier said than done, Ms Sidhu said that people should remember that change takes time.

"If you break your resolution, don't give up. If you can stick to your resolution for at least thirty days, you should be able to reset your habits for 2016," she said.

"If at first you don't succeed, make a fresh start and try again," Ms Sidhu said.

To help get the ball rolling, we've compiled a list of possible New Year's resolutions:

- **Physical activity** - Take the stairs instead of the elevator and walk or bike instead of driving whenever possible.
- **Eat healthier** - Eating fresh home cooked meals allows you to make healthier choices. For example, some restaurants use butter or oils with trans fats, you can cook at home with healthy olive oil.
- **Quit smoking** - In as little as 20 minutes you'll start to feel the benefits of not smoking including but not limited to a decreased blood pressure. The NSW Quitline (137 848) is a confidential telephone information and advice service. For the cost of a local call (except mobiles), professional telephone advisors provide encouragement, resources and support to help smokers quit. They are friendly, helpful, non-judgmental and are able to assist smokers at whatever stage they may be at in the quitting process. There is also 'QuitBuddy' which is a mobile phone app that is designed to support and encourage people their journey to becoming smoke free.

- **Switch off** - Turn off your mobile phone and concentrate on your friends and family rather than text messages, social media notifications and emails.
- **Read more** - Unplugging can include ditching the nightly television and internet session for a book instead.
- **Try socialising** - Do something every day that takes you out of your comfort zone, this can be as simple as smiling at a stranger, signing up for a salsa dance class, running an extra kilometre or meeting an email contact in person who you liaise with regularly for work.