

# New Year, New You...What Resolutions Will You Make?

**“Moving Grays Harbor”  
By Maryann Welch**

In the next couple of weeks, as 2006 wanes, many of you will be looking toward the New Year by making resolutions. Over the years, many New Years resolutions that I have set for myself have involved becoming fitter and healthier. Research shows that I'm not alone. Increasing exercise is the most common resolution according to a survey by the University of Washington. However, according to statistics, most of us lack the willpower required to last more than 2 weeks. Achieving success in our pledges will mean making a commitment throughout the year, not just directly after the holiday – that's the real trick.

Experts say the biggest factor for success is to develop a realistic goal at the outset. Going from the couch to an Iron Man competition might be a set-up for failure in improving fitness. A realistic resolution could be a specific increase in any physical activity in which you currently engage. Maybe there's an event such as a walk in the summer that can be a long-term goal. Resolutions are accomplished with many, many baby steps taken throughout the year.

Make a resolution that's meaningful to YOU. If you increase your level of physical activity what will it get you? Are you looking for reduced weight, lower cholesterol, lower blood pressure, better sleep, increased energy? Develop your resolution to include the

benefits you want, write them down and then check back periodically to see how you're progressing. I will confess to being a bit of a fanatic in tracking my weekly exercise, steps, and weight. That way I can make adjustments in my exercise routine or food intake if I see myself going in the wrong direction.

If one of your resolutions involves learning something new, how about making it health related? You could even recruit a friend to join you. Sharing your resolutions and goals can increase your chances of success. Maybe that friend will be the key to nudge you along (and visa-versa) and you will find that being accountable to someone else will help you both stick to your plan. Whether it's healthier eating, learning a new fitness activity or seeking help to quit smoking, the Harbor offers many resources to help you meet your health goals. You'll be surprised at what is offered when you start looking into it.

Just for fun, I recently polled the employees here in our Department to see if they had any resolutions that they would like to share for this column...here are a few of those responses:

Julie K: "Mine, as per usual, is to lose weight and exercise."

Karolyn H: "I want to begin practicing yoga or meditating 5-6 days a week in addition to my current fitness activities" (she also asks to cut back to part-time...note to Karolyn: I don't see that happening!).

Julie Z: "Pay more attention to healthy "self-talk"...for example, instead of saying 'I'm so out of shape' or 'I eat junk', tell yourself 'I was given a healthy body and that's how I am going to treat it'. That will improve your outlook, self-esteem and increase your chances of success."

Lucy M: "Our family new year's resolution is to do more backpacking, hiking and camping. We purchased a lot of gear last year, but only used it once! Our goal this year is to do 5 backpacking trips complete with guidance from our youngest child and her Dora the Explorer map!"

Erin S: "I would like to go to sleep earlier and take the time to read more books."

Patti L: "The most important thing that I'd like to do for myself this year is to exercise and eat right. I know if I can exercise 5 times a week that it will be easier for me to be successful at eating healthier and losing some weight. I know for a fact that I have more energy, sleep better and generally feel better about myself when I am able to exercise routinely."

Jessica T: "I have five resolutions this year. They are to stop smoking, play more board games with my kids, lose 25 pounds (slowly), exercise at least 4 times a week and take time for mini-vacations."

Jamie S: "I have made some positive changes in my eating habits and know I need to commit to exercise. My new year's resolution is to walk 30 minutes every day...rain or shine."

These goal-setters are bound to be more successful than most because they have both written their goals and shared them with others.

Along with these great resolutions, I also heard grumblings of taking the clothes off of the treadmill or stationary bike so that it could actually be used or picking up the weights instead of just stepping over them! As you can see, we all have some good

intentions...if motivation was only included!

I want to wish you and your family a very happy and healthy new year. May you be successful with any steps you resolve to take to improve your health in 2007. Cheers!

*Maryann Welch is the director of Grays Harbor County's Public Health and Social Services Department.*

*If you have questions about becoming more active or have information about free or low-cost activity in the area, contact the public health department at 532-8665 ext. 483, e-mail us at [moving@co.grays-harbor.wa.us](mailto:moving@co.grays-harbor.wa.us) or visit our web site at [www.ghphss.org](http://www.ghphss.org).*