

# Strengthen your resolve for the New Year

Moving Grays Harbor  
By Maryann Welch

Welcome to the New Year. Now that the holiday rush is over, have you thought about making any resolutions? I find that the last week of each year is usually quiet enough to focus on how I would like to enhance the quality of my life in the next twelve months. Many of you have likely been doing the same. Most New Year's Resolution lists include references to making changes in lifestyle that relate to improved health – losing weight, exercising more, eating more nutritious foods, and quitting unhealthy habits. I'm no exception, but this year I'm also trying to focus on other aspects of my life that contribute in a more indirect way to a healthier year.

All the experts tell us that we can maximize our chances of keeping those New Year's promises to ourselves by:

- **Writing down goals.** If they're down in black and white you'll have something to refer to later.
- **Being realistic.** Pick goals that are achievable in your current lifestyle.
- **Being specific.** Rather than; 'I want to exercise more', make it 'I want to include 30 minutes of activity in my day 5 days a week.' Or: "To lose weight, I'm going to walk during my lunch hour and cut X calories a day from my dietary intake'.
- **Not trying to do too much at once.** It would be good to quit smoking, lose weight and get fit all at once; but you're more likely to succeed if you start small.

- **Getting support.** It often helps to talk to someone about your goals- friends, family or a professional such as a psychologist or counselor. If they're aware of your goals, they're likely to be supportive and help you stay on track when you're struggling. It helps to have a friend who's made the same resolution so you can support each other. You can quit smoking or lose weight together.
- **Keeping a diary of your progress** – psychologists say that keeping a record of what you've done makes it more likely you'll stick to your regimen.

I'll take the bold step for 2008 of following a couple of tips from above. I'll share my Resolutions in writing with all of you and rely on you to help me stay on track and be my cheerleaders...here goes:

1. Learn and practice meditation on a daily basis. I know this sounds far out, but many health-related articles have told me lately that meditation is beneficial for both physical and mental health. Yes, I am more relaxed and less stressed in retirement, but this is a health improvement strategy I want to try. I already have an instructional CD and book, but resolve to seek a class to help me achieve all of the benefits.
2. Increase my intake of water. When I was working I usually consumed 60 oz. of water daily. I have not yet successfully fit this in to my new routine. My goal is to consume 20 oz. by noon, 20 more by 4 pm, and 20 more before bed.
3. Read a book a month. For many years I was weary of reading because of all the necessary work-related documents I had to

read on a daily basis. Now, I'd like to re-acquaint myself with reading for pleasure. Part of this goal also includes making more use of the great community resource we have in the Timberland Libraries.

4. Play cribbage with husband Jim at least twice a week. I have a double edge to this resolution. The game makes us sit down together and enjoy each other and in order for me to win a few games I realize that I must put more time into honing my skills!
5. Downhill ski at least six times this winter. I'm already on my way with a vacation planned in February to Colorado, plus I will day-ski with friends and family on three additional occasions, once in January, once in February and once in March.
6. Every month share an activity day with a friend. This is a matter of dueling calendars, but I will be persistent and have several friends with whom I can connect.
7. Practice yoga at least two hours each week. Reaching this goal will include both practice at home and seeking out a variety of classes offered in the Harbor. Keeping a log of yoga time is already part of my routine, but as I review 2007, I can see that there's a need to have a more firm resolve.

If you have ideas for your own Resolutions for 2008, I encourage reviewing the tips for success. Setting goals is a worthy exercise to begin the New Year and any steps taken to improve your life will be a benefit for you and those you love. And, if you don't succeed, don't despair – resolutions are recyclable and you can try again next year...but more importantly, every effort you make toward improving your own

health is something to celebrate.

Here's to a healthy and happy 2008!

*Maryann Welch is the recently retired 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 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).*