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EMBRACE A FRESH START IN 2025

BUILD LASTING HABITS

The upcoming year offers a fresh start, filled with endless possibilities for growth and well-being. Whether it's improving your health, setting new personal goals, or nurturing meaningful relationships, this is the perfect opportunity to embrace positive change.

Let's enter 2025 with a sense of purpose and optimism. Take a moment to reflect on what you truly want to achieve and how you can turn those dreams into reality. With the right mindset, realistic goals, and a bit of encouragement, you can transform your resolutions into lasting habits that enrich your life. So, let's get ready to embark on this exciting journey together – to a healthier, happier, and more fulfilling new year!

Whatever your goal may be, the important thing is that you are on the right path to achieving it. To help you stay on track, here are some tips for sticking to your New Year's resolutions and maximizing your

chances of success:

HOW TO CREATE AN OBTAINABLE GOAL

- 1. Start with small goals:** Feeling motivated and ambitious is great, but don't let your excitement lead to unattainable levels. If you want to try a new activity, start slowly and consistently to build up your body's tolerance. This approach can help prevent discouragement along the way.
- 2. Make it measurable:** For your goal to be achievable, make it specific and measurable. For example, if you want to exercise more, set a clear goal such as 30 minutes a day, 4 times a week. If you're aiming to lose weight, specify a healthy target weight you want to reach. By setting measurable benchmarks, you can track your progress effectively.
- 3. Be realistic:** Align your goals with your lifestyle and what you can realistically achieve. Being honest with yourself and considering the time and resources available will help you maintain motivation.
- 4. Create a plan:** Knowing what you want to achieve is just the first step. Determine the when, where, and why of your goal to establish an action plan. This will set you on the right path to success.
- 5. Stay positive:** Making changes can be challenging, but focusing on the positive aspects will help you stay motivated. Instead of dwelling on the difficulties, remind yourself of the benefits and the impact your goal will have on your life. Positive thinking can make a big difference in achieving your resolutions.

By setting realistic, manageable goals and following these tips, you can increase your chances of turning your resolutions into reality in 2025.

HEALTHY RESOLUTIONS FOR 2025

Prioritize Sleep

- **Stick to a schedule:** Aim for consistent sleep and wake times daily, even on weekends. A regular

sleep routine helps your body adjust, improving restfulness and alertness.

- **Use your bedroom for sleep only:** Avoid activities like watching TV or scrolling on social media in bed, as blue light disrupts melatonin production and makes it harder to sleep.
- **Plan for 7–8 hours of sleep:** Prioritize rest by scheduling enough time for sleep each night.
- **Unwind at night:** Shut off devices an hour before bed and engage in relaxing activities like journaling, reading, or meditating.

Eat Smart

- **Cook at home more often:** Preparing meals at home allows you to control ingredients and make healthier choices. Consider meal kits or batch cooking to save time.
- **Set realistic goals:** Start with small changes, like adding an extra serving of vegetables to your meals, and gradually increase your cooking and meal-preparation skills.

Move More

- **Take the stairs:** Skip the elevator for short trips and incorporate more movement into your daily routine.
- **Start slow:** If you're not used to exercising, start with simple activities like taking a short walk each day or doing stretches at your desk every hour. Gradually increase the intensity and duration of your physical activities.
- **Park farther away:** Choose parking spots at the far end of lots to increase your daily steps.
- **Take movement breaks:** Set reminders to stretch or walk every hour to counteract long periods of sitting.

Stay Positive

- **Practice self-kindness:** Replace negative self-talk with affirmations of your body's strength and resilience.
- **Set mental health goals:** Make time for activities that help you relax and unwind, like a daily meditation practice or spending time with loved ones. These activities help reduce stress and improve overall well-being.
- **Practice gratitude:** Counter stress with reminders of things you're thankful for, like supportive friends, health, or joyful moments.

Drink Smarter

- **Stay hydrated:** Incorporate water into your day by drinking a glass in the morning and before and after meals.
- **Limit alcohol:** Swap heavy drinks for lighter options or alternate alcoholic beverages with water.
- **Avoid liquid calories:** Opt for water, unsweetened tea, or black coffee instead of sugary drinks.

Partner with Your Primary Care Provider

- **Get an annual physical:** Use this time to review your vitals and discuss your health goals.
- **Set health targets:** Discuss realistic goals with your doctor based on your individual health needs. For example, if you need to lose weight, focus on a gradual, sustainable weight loss plan.
- **Work together:** Collaborate with your doctor to create a personalized health plan to help you stay on track with your 2025 resolutions.

Start the new year strong by setting realistic goals that are achievable and sustainable. By breaking your resolutions into smaller steps, you can build lasting habits for a healthier, happier you in 2025.



STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINING HEALTHY HABITS

TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR HEALTH JOURNEY

After exploring healthy habits for the new year, the next step is making those goals a reality. Personal accountability is key to staying on track with your health ambitions. Whether you're aiming to improve physical fitness, manage stress, or enhance your well-being, taking responsibility for your actions can lead to significant positive changes. Personal accountability benefits your health, but it can also boost your performance in both your personal and

professional life. The good news is that developing this sense of accountability can be enjoyable and rewarding, helping you fully reap the benefits of achieving your health goals.

WHAT IS PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY?

Personal accountability means taking ownership of your actions and their outcomes. It's a skill that's often emphasized in professional development, but its benefits extend to improving your personal health and wellness as well. Taking responsibility for the consequences of your actions empowers you to make choices that align with your health goals, setting you up for success.

Benefits of Keeping Yourself Accountable

- 1. Increased Motivation:** Personal accountability helps keep you motivated, especially when setbacks occur. By owning your failures and learning from them, you empower yourself to continue moving forward.
- 2. Tracking Your Progress:** When you are personally accountable, you are more likely to keep track of your goals and progress. Knowing where you stand and what you're doing to achieve your goals can lead to more targeted and effective actions.
- 3. Improved Relationships:** Personal accountability can enhance your relationships with others. When others see you taking responsibility for your actions, it fosters a sense of reliability and support in your relationships.

Ways to Stay Accountable

- 1. Remove Blame:** Accept setbacks as part of the process and learn from them. Take responsibility for what goes wrong and focus on getting back on track.
- 2. Set Clear Goals:** Setting SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely) ensures you have clear, actionable steps toward your objectives.
- 3. Reward Yourself:** Celebrate your successes by rewarding yourself when you achieve your goals. Whether it's a movie night with friends or a small treat, acknowledging your achievements helps reinforce your commitment to personal accountability.
- 4. Do What You Enjoy:** Make wellness enjoyable. Find a workout or mindfulness practice that you enjoy, and make it a regular part of your routine.

Personal accountability can be fulfilling when you take pride in your choices and actions.

- 5. Remind Yourself of Your Achievements:** Reflect on your progress to stay motivated. Whether it's comparing your fitness levels from the start of your journey or recalling a challenging exercise that you've now mastered, remembering your accomplishments can inspire continued commitment.
- 6. Keep Track of Your Progress:** Regularly measure your progress to stay motivated. Using an app or journal to track physical achievements or progress reports with a friend can help you monitor your success.
- 7. Get an Accountability Partner:** An accountability buddy can provide the support you need to stay on track. Whether it's a friend, family member, or colleague, sharing your goals with someone else can motivate you to keep working towards them.

PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT YOUR HEALTH GOALS

- Health Coaching:** Struggling with your exercise goals or thinking about quitting smoking? Work one-on-one with a trained health coach through the [ThriveOn portal](#). Complete the Online Health Assessment to unlock personalized health coaching options. Together, you'll develop a plan tailored to your unique needs and goals, with your coach helping you stay motivated and make progress.
- WeightWatchers:** With the WeightWatchers program and award-winning app, you can lose weight, eat healthier, move more and develop a more positive mindset.
- Nutrition Counseling:** All Cooperative members enrolled in the health plan have unlimited visits with an in-network nutritionist or dietitian covered at 100%. These resources are available to help you manage your health and nutrition effectively.

By fostering personal accountability and taking advantage of the supportive programs offered through The Franklin County Cooperative and ThriveOn, you can confidently take meaningful steps toward achieving your health goals. Embracing personal accountability involves taking ownership of your actions, tracking your progress, and rewarding yourself along the way. With the resources and encouragement available through these programs, you can enhance your quality of life and successfully reach your health objectives.

Food and Our Mood

How we eat can directly impact our mental wellbeing. Below are just 3 examples of nutrients that support our mood. To learn more, check out the blog article: [How Food Can Affect Your Mood](#).

Vitamin D- This valuable vitamin is vital for bone health, but low levels have been linked to depression and anxiety disorders as well. Aim for 600-800 IU (15-20 mcg/day) each day through foods like eggs, salmon, or fortified milk. Sunshine is always our best source of this vitamin.

Omega-3's- These are an essential fatty acid, meaning we have to get them from our diet. Getting enough omega-3's may help protect brain health and have an anti-inflammatory effect on the body. These foods include fatty fish, nuts and seeds, or olive oil.

Protein- Protein not only helps us feel and stay full, but can aid in stabilizing our blood sugar and even increase the release of mood hormones like dopamine and norepinephrine. Aim for 4 to 6-ounce servings of protein 2 to 3 times a day from sources like eggs, fish, poultry, beans, or even lentils.

More Harm Than Good?

The way we eat can also work against our mental wellbeing. Simple sugars, found in ultra-processed foods and drinks, are quickly digested leading to blood sugar spikes and crashes. To stabilize mood, limit these foods while incorporating more fiber and protein into each meal to slow the overall rate of digestion.

December Recipe: Golden Chickpea Soup



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