Six New Resolutions



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Every twelve months we go through the same ritual. On December 31st, when the stroke of midnight proclaims a new year, many pledge to make this year a healthier and safer year. We resolve to give up smoking, lose weight, start an exercise program or stop drinking alcohol. Our rate of failure is spectacular! New Year’s resolutions are usually pie-in-the-sky goals which fail because we want to accomplish too much— too quickly. This year try some new tactics for self-improvement.

1. **Set attainable goals for the coming year:**
   Start with small goals and reward yourself for attaining each level. Join a support group if you are trying to lose weight, stop smoking, and give up drugs or alcohol. Enjoy your successes a day at a time.
2. **Like yourself:**
   You can’t change your basic shape—height, bone size or the length of your arms and legs so focus on who you are and not how you look. If you are a happy person, you can be a safer and healthier person. Unhappiness can be a life-threatening distraction from the safe operation of vehicles, machinery or equipment.
3. **Control your blood pressure:**
   Learn to control unsafe blood pressure with diet, exercise, weight loss and medication as prescribed by your doctor. Visit your doctor for a complete physical before embarking on any change in your current exercise levels. For added personal safety, make sure you have regular checkups.
4. **Eat for health:**
   Reduce your fat and cholesterol intake and increase the fiber in your diet. Avoid food with saturated fats such as whole milk, fatty red meats, lard and shortening, which can contribute to heart disease. Add whole grain breads, cereals such as oatmeal, fresh fruits, vegetables, beans and peas to your meals. Cut down on, or avoid altogether, alcohol and caffeine in beverages.
5. **Be active every day:**
   Try climbing extra flights of stairs on your way to work. After work get off the bus several stops too early and walk the rest of the way home. Try swimming, gardening or mowing the lawn for half an hour. Wash your car or play fetch with your dog. Learn a new sport such as Tai Chi, archery, skiing, canoeing, hockey, softball or badminton. Being in good physical condition makes you safer by giving you the ability to respond quickly to a hazard.
6. **Reduce stress:**
   Learn to control your stress with exercise, diet and plenty of relaxation—not

drugs and alcohol. At work, get away from your job by taking a ten minute stress-break at coffee time and go for a brisk walk on your lunch break. After work, play softball with your kids or walk the dog. Treat yourself to a long warm bath while you listen to good music or read an interesting book. Learn to say “no” to extra commitments and “yes” to time with friends and family.