

# New Year, Same Promise



By Bob Poston, BS, CFT,  
Fitness For Life

Ah, it is that time of year again. It is time to resolve to be different at something; physically, mentally or emotionally. Yes, we said we would do it last year or maybe the year before, but definitely this year. Something happens along the way and we push our promise back a little at a time until the year is gone. Whatever that something is, we know that it is wrong for us or why else would we resolve to change it. The problem for many folks is that the resolution they make is just too drastic a change for them to succeed in completing. Too many people set themselves up for failure right from the start. Goals, whether professional or personal, need to be SMART. That means they need to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound.

It is safe to say that almost everyone makes the, "I am going to start exercising" resolution. Health clubs across the country are

gearing up for an explosion in their membership numbers. Unfortunately the explosion will start to fizzle out by the middle of February, maybe even earlier. People fail to realize that there is more involved than just doing some exercises. They need to be prepared to commit to a lifestyle change. A change that is going to involve taking smaller steps for most of us out there. Sure, there will be the gifted few who can make almost immediate changes in their body composition. However, there will be many more of us that are going to have to work harder and longer to see results. This is where you have to layout your plan and stay focused, committed and patient.

Let us say that you resolve to lose 20 pounds before summer. That is your goal; reduce weight by 20 pounds while increasing lean muscle tissue. Remember earlier we talked about SMART goals. So let's test this one and see if it is indeed SMART. It is specific, lose 20 pounds before summer. It is measurable; we need to be 20 pounds lighter than when we started. Since it is safe and healthy to lose a pound a week, the goal is attainable and realistic. Reaching this goal by summer completes the time bound requirement. To make sure we stay on course, check points or milestones need to be established as well. A weekly weigh in to track progress will quickly identify if adjustments need to be made.

There are 3500 calories in one pound of

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fat. To safely lose one pound a week, you must create a 500-calorie deficit each day. That deficit can be in the form of burning 500 calories more in your daily activity or a combination of more activity and less calories consumed. You still need to take in five or six small meals over the course of the day so do not skip any meals. You may find it helpful to keep track of your meals in a food journal. This is an excellent way to see what your nutritional habits look like and where you can make better food choices.

So, when you sit down to make that New Year's Resolution this time around, remember to make it a SMART one and make good on that promise to yourself.

