



5 WAYS TO ACHIEVE AND SUSTAIN YOUR 2019 DIET GOALS

Strategize YOUR NEW YEAR **Diet** Resolutions



BY MERILEE KERN

As a branding pundit, wellness industry veteran, consumer health advocate and influential media voice, Merilee Kern spotlights noteworthy marketplace innovations, change makers, movers and shakers. Also a two-time fitness champion, her ground-breaking, award-winning “Kids Making Healthy Choices” Smartphone APP for children, parents/caregivers and educators is based on her award-winning, illustrated fictional children’s books. Reach her online at www.TheLuxeList.com.

As health-seekers strategize their diet and fitness approach for the New Year, there are a few simple but key considerations that can make all the difference between a successful – and even profitable – weight-loss endeavour and a wellness resolution that falls far short.

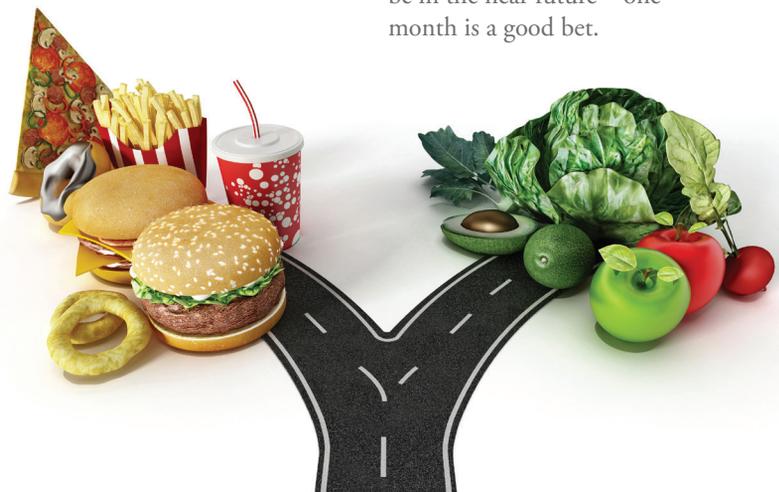
Jimmy Fleming, co-founder of HealthyWage – the industry-leading purveyor of corporate and team-based weight loss challenges

and financially-induced diet contests for individuals, offers these insights and perspectives on five critical elements needed for the best chance of success with a weight-loss initiative:

Map out specific goals & timeframes

You are far more likely to achieve your diet resolution if you spend a few minutes thinking it through. Sit down at your desk and dedicate even just 10 minutes of your life to

strategizing your resolution. Put pen to paper or, better yet, send an email to a friend or family member and make a list of the things you’re going to do to change your weight. Simply stating that “I’m going to lose weight” is not nearly specific enough, but it makes a good headline at the top. Write down a date when you will achieve your first goal. This date should be in the near future – one month is a good bet.



2019



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Now, make a specific, realistic goal. Most experts agree that you're most likely to succeed if you don't starve yourself, and plan on losing one to two pounds per week. In fact, setting a modest goal – say, one pound per week – can spare you a lot of hunger and stress. You might even forget you're on a diet! Put your goal and goal date on your calendar (e.g., "Weigh 150 pounds" as an entry for January 30).

Go back to your piece of paper or email. Under your goal and goal date, write down the word "food." Ask yourself: what exactly is your eating plan? Are you going to follow a particular diet? If so, when are you going to start? Your answer should be "right now." If your diet requires that you purchase something or register on a certain website, go do that right now! What about exercise? What specific days and times will you commit to exercising? Who will you exercise with? If possible, call a friend now and set something up.

Review your resolution plan frequently as you work your way toward your goal. When your goal date comes, call a friend to either brag about your achievement or confess that you didn't achieve it and tell them what's going to be different for the next goal date. Now, sit down again (pen to paper or fingers to keyboard) and set a new goal date and goal. Keep going!

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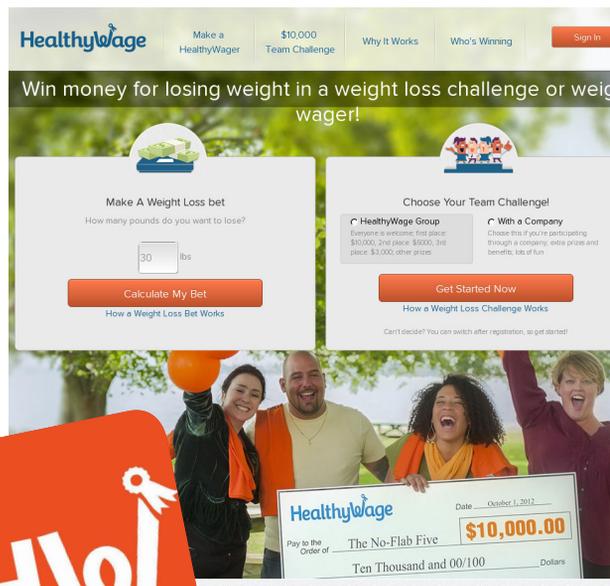


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Do one thing at a time

Trying to stick to more than one resolution creates a willpower diffusion that is almost always a recipe for failure. Your weight loss resolution requires time, planning and lots of action items. The winding road from plump to sexy is made of many cobblestones that you have to lay down one at a time with lots of

small, frequent decisions (e.g., “this morning, I am going to skip that second donut”). With all the good judgment and willpower those little decisions require, you simply won’t have the time and energy for your other resolutions, too. If you think your weight loss resolution isn’t that big of a deal, you might be off track.

Set up financial incentives

After you’ve written out your specific goals and dates, your best bet is to build a little structure into them. Enter: prizes and rewards. A significant amount of academic research shows that you are much more likely to achieve your resolution if you include a double financial incentive – i.e., money to lose if you fail and money to win if you succeed. The reason money works better than the natural motivators of vanity and health is that money can be tied to specific, measurable goals and deadlines. In other words, financial incentives help prevent procrastination by establishing a firm start date, and help prevent quitting by establishing a firm goal date. Financial incentives also make weight loss a lot more fun and exciting by transforming the process into a game.



Tell everyone

Or, at least tell a few friends or family members about your endeavour. If you're not willing to tell someone about your diet resolution, you might not be committed enough to succeed. When you tell other people about your plans, a magical thing happens. You know that your supporters are waiting to hear news of your success, and you don't want to let them down. Some researchers believe that the social element is one of the most powerful tools in your arsenal.

Plus, it's important to have support – i.e., people to brag to when you succeed; people to talk to when you feel like overeating. Talking is a great antidote to a desire to binge or eat things that could get in the way of your success. If you're really determined to achieve your resolution, you should consider taking the social element even farther. Try writing a blog about your progress. Not only will your readers help keep you seriously accountable, but you may discover that being a great teacher is one of the best ways to learn and improve your own success.



Seek fellowship

When you tell people about your diet resolution, be on the look-out for a dieting partner (or group of partners). When you work on your diet resolution with a buddy or group of friends or family members, you are even more likely to accomplish your goals. You get all the benefits of accountability plus the comfort and fun of knowing there's someone waiting for you to exercise, compare food and restaurant experiences, and share the ups and downs of dieting. According to the American Psychiatric Association, "Enlisting family and friends in the effort may help." One study shows that participants who do a weight loss program with friends are more than twice as likely to keep their weight off than those that try to do it on their own.



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