



New Year's Resolutions

✓ MAKING THEM STICK By A. Yamine Collins

LIKE MANY NEW YORKERS, Linda Karloff, 43, has had her share of failed New Year's resolutions to lose weight.

"I make the resolution every January," says Karloff, who teaches commercial acting. "But by March, I find I've fallen off the wagon."

She's not alone. Every January 1st, millions of Americans decide on a myriad of resolutions they hope will improve their lives: quit smoking, volunteer more, get a better job, drink less alcohol and—perhaps the most famous resolution—lose weight. Yet, although we start out gung-ho about our goals in January, we often grow discour-

aged soon afterward.

Part of the reason for our "failures" is that we create unrealistic expectations for ourselves.

"We tend to overstate what we want to accomplish," says Dr. Jeffrey Borenstein, CEO and Medical Director of The Hollywood Hospital in Queens. "People need to set goals that are actually achievable."

For example, if you've never exercised before, claiming you're going to exercise every day for 45 minutes, and sticking to it, is unlikely.

"You've got to be honest with yourself," agrees Alana Reed, who teaches Pilates at her Living Proof Studio on East 54th Street. "It's better to start out with the idea of, 'Hey, I'm going to take a spin class once a week for 3 weeks.' Accomplish that, and then add on."

It's also important to plan your workouts at a time when you know you can be consistent about them; for a lot of New Yorkers that's morning time.

"You've got to be honest with yourself"

— Alana Reed, Pilates instructor



But, be sure to jot that "exercise time" down on your calendar, like you would any other appointment.

"Treat it as a block of time that doesn't change," says Reed, who cautions that scheduling exercise time can still be difficult for many people, because of the varied distractions that come up. But, rather than sacrifice your exercise time in order to hang out with friends, have them join you instead.

"Having someone else along with you makes it more likely you'll show up anyway," says Reed. "Because you know someone is depending on you."

Dr. Borenstein contends that enlisting friends is actually crucial to your success.

"Too often people try to accomplish their goals on their own," he explains. "They

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don't make use of family and friends. But it's actually easier to accomplish a goal with the support of loved ones."

And if you already have a friend who exercises regularly, make use of that friend's success; joining up with him or her can even ease the anxiety of performing something new.

Also, make sure your goals are important — important to you, that is.

Too often we might decide on things that aren't vital to us, and that affects how diligent we are in pursuing success.

"The goals you set must really be a priority for you," agrees Dr. Borenstein, who also hosts a public television series called *Healthy Minds* produced at WLJW. "Otherwise, you're not going to stick to it."

It's also a great idea to set up both short- and long-term goals. With short-term goals, you're likely to see a speedy outcome, boosting confidence and keeping you motivated.

"It's very important for people to see results in their body," explains Reed, who offers Pilates mat-only work to individuals and groups in private homes and corporate offices. "It's the same psychology behind the paychecks we receive; if we got paid every 3 months, we wouldn't be very motivated. But, when we're paid every week..."

One of the quickest ways to see results in your body is to change up your exercise regimen.

"The body responds very well to changes," contends Reed, who gushes about the great core strengthening affects that Pilates — along with cardio — can make on the physique.

"Take bicycling or yoga or running," she says. "Mix it up."

You can also reward yourself with each accomplishment you achieve. Lost 5 pounds? Treat yourself to a new pair of jeans. Stuck with your running routine for the month? Be bold; enter a 5k run.

While long term goals can be harder to envision, they have benefits also. "Long-term goals make the change more of a lifestyle change," says Dr. Borenstein. "But it should be something you can envision yourself doing in August and October, not just in January."

Of course, there are other factors that can affect our initial motivation. Some

people might have a depression or an anxiety disorder that is undiagnosed or untreated. And living in a Northern climate like New York, people can also be more susceptible to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which relates to a depression that occurs in the late autumn and winter due to the shortening of the days.

"Having an untreated depression makes it difficult to be at one's highest level in a number of areas," insists Dr. Borenstein, who interviewed Jane Pauley about her

own struggle with bipolar disorder. "But, there is help. There's no need to suffer silently."

Hard economic times can discourage you, too, keeping you from the gym and certain classes. But, take heart and take advantage of whatever promotions people are offering.

"Don't be afraid to ask, 'Hey, can I come in for a trial,' says Reed. "Businesses are doing whatever they can to get people in their doors." ■



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