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# New Year brings chance to begin again with clean slate

There is something powerful about having the chance to make a fresh start — to begin again with a clean slate. A new year brings the perfect opportunity to make a new or renewed commitment to health. Many people (including me) take advantage of the change of the calendar to set goals and make New Year's resolutions. Unfortunately, most of us (me included) get to the end of the year and realize they have fallen short in some areas they had hoped and planned to improve on. This isn't necessarily a bad thing — because becoming a better (or healthier) person is not a destination, it's a journey.

Readers of my last column know that the four most common "resolutions" are to quit smoking, be healthy, start exercising and lose weight. While all of these are great aspirations, they're also very hard to gauge your

## HEALTHY BOTTOM LINE



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and new diet to minimize the effects of all that holiday cheer. By Super Bowl Sunday, the novelty has worn off, and by Valentine's Day, most people have drifted back into their old habits. Sound familiar? Why is it this way? And, how can we make 2010 different? Let's consider some possibilities.

Start by making an attitude adjustment. After all, what we're thinking contributes to our reality, right? Here's what I mean — imagine that someone

progress by — hard to achieve.

You know how it is. The first of year, you (and everyone else) are starting some sort of exercise regime

is approaching the New Year with the attitude of "It's pretty much the same old year, everything will be the same old way." If the person expects that everything's going to be the same, it probably will be. There's almost a built-in bias for failure — and little room for new possibilities.

It's a self-fulfilling cycle. A limiting thought leads to an expectation, which colors someone's experience — and provides them with all the evidence they need to convince them that their original thought was true. (For more information on the Thought Cycle, visit

the Health News tab on our Web site.)

With the foundation of possibility established, we can get selective and specific. We can balance the imagined with the real and achievable. This year, rather than make a list of resolutions or a big non-specific one (like the four listed above), I am asking that you join me and invite others to do the following. Choose one small and simple DAILY thing to improve your health — starting in January. That small thing, which may be as simple as eat one piece of fruit a day — needs to be a specific, measurable daily thing that you either

do — or don't do. If you need some good ideas, check out [www.small-step.gov](http://www.small-step.gov) or the link on our home page to download a printable list of 171 small, but great steps.

Take a minute now to think what that one small thing might be. Discuss it with your husband, wife, significant other or friend. Agree to do it together; then write it down. When Monday comes, just do it! And, just to do it each and every day for the next month. Feeling the difference this small thing makes to your health can boost your confidence in your ability to change and will inspire you to make

additional and commitments through out the year.

Once you've achieved your goal, add another from the list.

What if you and I — and all our neighbors and friends — committed to this "resolution"? If, to start 2010, we all take one small step towards a healthy future, what a difference it would make to health of our community!

*Previous Bottom Line articles are available at Register-Herald.com; search Healthy Bottom Line, under the News tab at [Bodyworkshfr.com](http://Bodyworkshfr.com) or on Mick Bates' Facebook page.*



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