



The new you

2023

A guide
to a happier,
healthier you

A DAILY JOURNAL
PUBLICATION

INSIDE: Keep a positive attitude as you improve your diet



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DAILY JOURNAL

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HOME



NEW YEAR NEW START

Tackle those home projects you've been putting off

STORY BY CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Now that a new year has arrived, for many, it may signal a time to finally tackle some of those long-held-off projects around the house.

In general, when it comes to your home, there are maintenance tasks that you can and should do to preserve its look and efficiency that can also help bring you peace of mind.

Looking to take on some maintenance tasks to kick off the new year? Here is a quick-start checklist to get you on track.

1. Check your electricity usage and loads. Ask yourself: Are you using your home in the most energy-efficient way? Are your appliances working in a way that provides adequate output while not wasting energy resources?

2. Check for leaks and openings. As winter hunkers down in certain parts of the country, this also means water elements such as snow and ice. Help maintain your house by making sure openings and gaps are shored up.

3. Prioritize and list home improvement projects. So many homeowners wait until they are faced with a long list of to-dos before making an action plan. Now is a good time to take a look around your home and make a wish list for the year.

4. Check windows and doors. During winter months there is a need to keep cold temperatures out and in summer months, to keep cool temperatures in. Summer is a good time to consider upgrading or replacing doors and windows.

5. Check the quality and integrity of key items such as HVAC systems, generators, battery backups, wells and septic tanks. Should core items fail during the heart of winter, it may be difficult to correct. Be proactive.

Cathy Hobbs, based in New York City, is an Emmy Award-winning television host and a nationally known interior design and home staging expert.

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EDUCATION

BACK TO SCHOOL



Expand your opportunities by going back to school

STORY BY JENN WILLHITE

PHOTOS BY ADOBESTOCK

The adage that it is never too late to learn has never been truer than it is in 2023.

As more people reimagine their work spaces and what their career paths look like in this new year, many are returning to the classroom for the numerous benefits of continuing education as an adult — everything from enrolling in a degree program to finally finishing their GED or high school equivalency.

Among the more obvious benefits of attaining one's GED is establishing a solid foundation for further education and career development, says Michelle Davis, director of adult education at Central Nine Career Center in Greenwood.

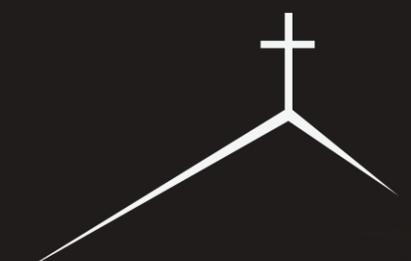
"There's better opportunities for advancement at work if you are employed and if you are not employed, a lot of employers are requiring a high school diploma or equivalency," Davis says. "And all employers, universities and state colleges accept the high school equivalency, as well as the

U.S. military."

According to the United States Census Bureau and the Department of Labor and Statistics, in 2019, more than one third of the U.S. population had a bachelor's degree or higher. In addition, in that same year, 46 percent of adult students age 25 years old and older who had a GED or high school equivalency and who were enrolled in two- and four-year continuing education programs graduated. And that number continues to increase.

Additionally, the advent of organizations like Complete College America (CCA) help to not only increase college graduation rates for all students, but also promote equitable accessibility to continuing education programs by encouraging a post-one-size-fits-all approach to higher education.

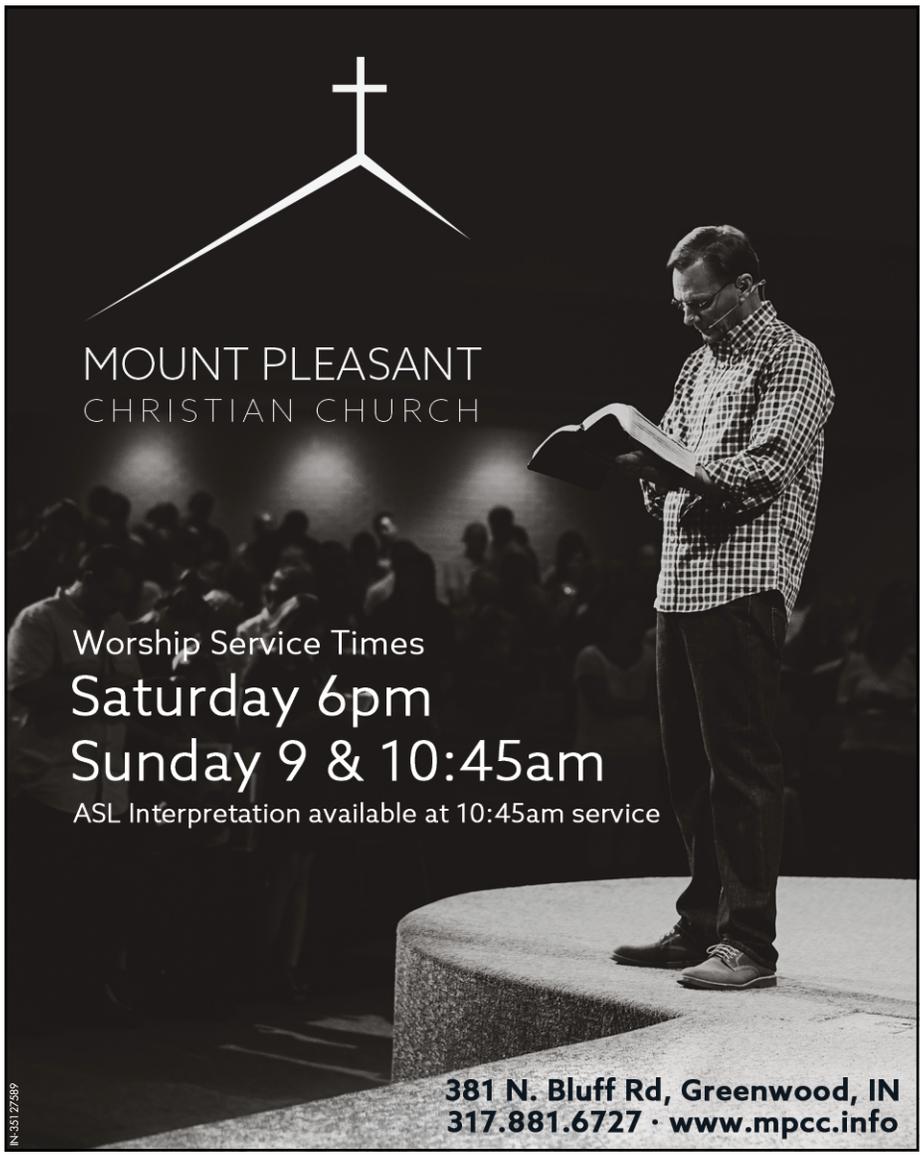
Area community colleges, both accredited and not, offer GED preparation classes on a regular basis free of charge, as well as English language skill development courses.



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See School, Page 6

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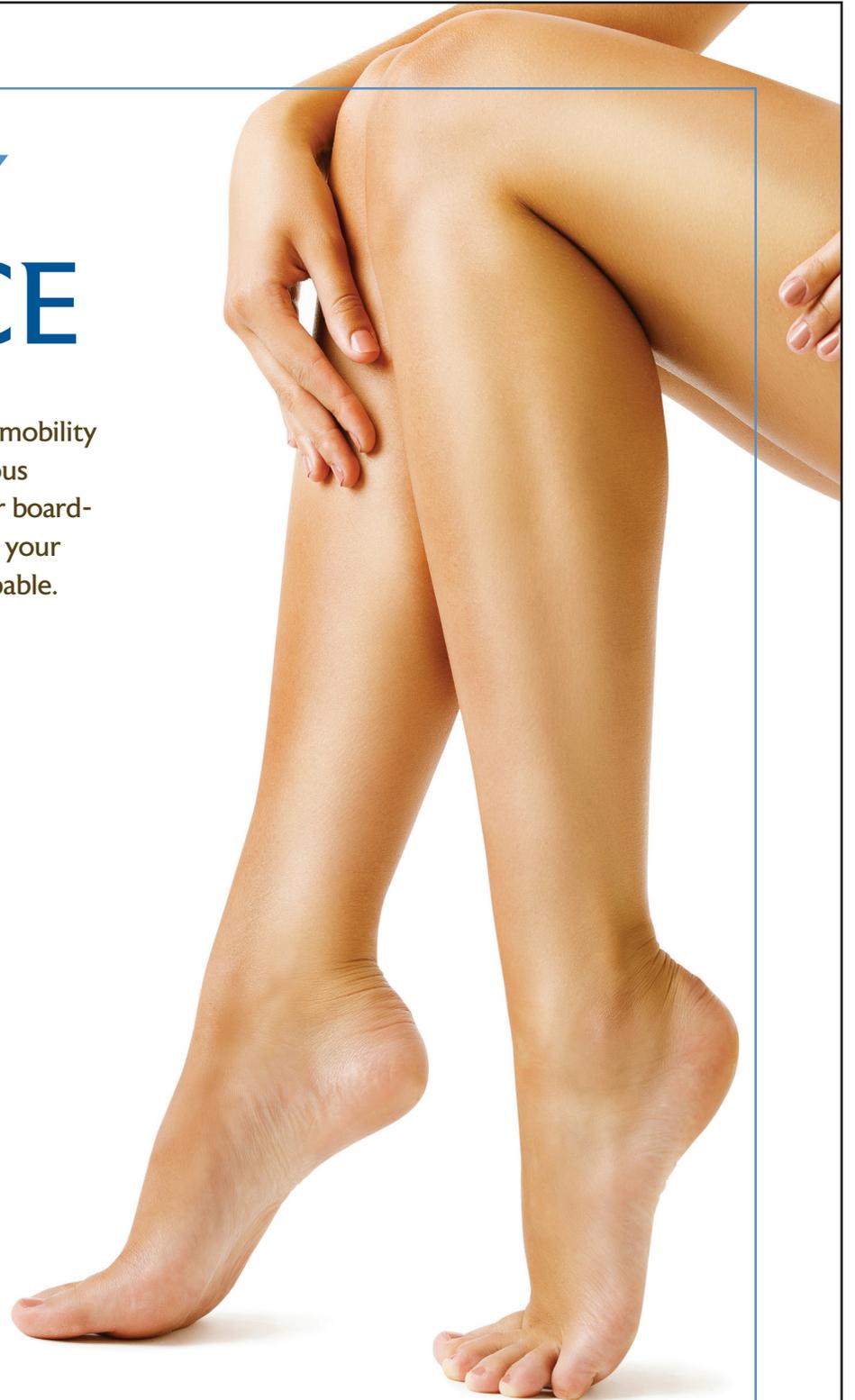
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5 tips to ace college entry exams

By eLivingtoday.com

Because most colleges and universities require applicants to submit ACT or SAT results as part of admissions consideration, prepping for the test itself can be a critical component of that process.

While it can oftentimes be hard to deal with the anxiety that comes with a rigorous test meant to show your mastery of certain subjects and concepts, such as reading and mathematics, consider these test prep tips to help boost your score while simultaneously lowering stress.

Register early

To allow yourself as much flexibility as possible, taking college entrance exams during your junior year of high school is encouraged. If you don't get an ideal score, you can refine your approach and retake the exam with a better idea of what to expect.

Take a practice test

Any test prep plan should start with a practice SAT or ACT exam. Taking practice tests under

realistic conditions can help you gain a better understanding of the content of the test, improve your time management and help combat test anxiety.

Sign Up for a prep course

If you find studying on your own difficult or not as successful as you'd hoped, a prep course can put you through the paces and hold you accountable. Complete with homework and in-class practice, prep classes can range from small groups to larger classes taught by test experts.

Gather supplies

To help reduce test day stress, gather everything you'll need the night before. Check the list of banned items - cellphones aren't permitted - to make sure you don't accidentally bring something you're not allowed to have.

Get a good night's sleep and eat breakfast

While it can be tempting to stay up late the night before the test to cram, you're likely to perform better with a full night's sleep.



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School, from Page 4

"For English language learners, this is a good opportunity for them to learn the English language so they can better communicate with their children who are in school here," Davis says. "As well as being able to better communicate with the teachers and help their kids with their homework."

According to Ivy Tech's web site, free GED prep and English Language Skill development classes are offered on a regular rotating basis. Programs offered through traditional four-year institutions, such as IUPUI, are utilized by adult learners via adult learning programs like the university's Center for Transfer and Adult Students.

Returning to the classroom doesn't necessarily have to mean you are seeking a degree. Adult learners can audit classes for personal enrichment, fulfill prerequisites for a professional or degree program, and even attain certification to teach in elementary or secondary school.

Simply returning to school sets the tone and an example, Davis says.

"It is setting a good example if the individual has young children for the importance of being educated and getting their high school diploma or equivalency," Davis says. "As well as role modeling and good work ethic."

Being back in the classroom as an

adult allows one to apply life experience, which is priceless. Not only do you take the education experience more seriously as an adult, but you have work experience and a better idea about proper time management, Davis says.

Another benefit of returning to school these days is the plethora of class and program offerings - there are far more than back in the day.

Today, the process for acquiring one's high school equivalency simply requires a little preparation and a test, Davis says.

"When you come to orientation, we do a T.A.B.E - test of adult basic education," Davis explains. "We do some testing to figure out where you are, what level you are at so we know where you are going to start."

Additionally, Central Nine - like many others - has life coaches who meet with incoming adult students, help them to set goals and establish a class schedule.

Returning to the classroom also helps increase one's self-esteem and sense of accomplishment, Davis says.

"Not only is there advancement, if they already have a job, but maybe changing career choices," Davis says. "It can give them a skill to get into a different career path. There are lots of different opportunities out there."

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6 ways to build lasting healthy habits

STORY BY FAMILY FEATURES

Starting on a path toward healthy habits is often easier than maintaining them long term. This year, you can avoid a major pitfall of healthy resolutions and build healthy habits that stick by working small, positive steps into your daily life.

In fact, healthy habits are the first suggested treatment strategy for people whose blood pressure and cholesterol levels are creeping higher than normal, according to an American Heart Association scientific statement.

“The current guidelines for managing high blood pressure and

cholesterol recognize that otherwise healthy individuals with mildly or moderately elevated levels of these cardiovascular risk factors should actively attempt to reduce these risks, and increasing physical activity is a great place to start,” said Bethany Barone Gibbs, Ph.D., chair of the statement writing group and chair of the department of epidemiology and biostatistics at West Virginia University School of Public Health.

These six ideas from the American Heart Association’s Healthy for Good Habit Coach can help:

BUST HABIT-BUILDING MYTHS

You may be surprised to learn the truth about creating and sticking to healthy habits. One myth is getting healthy means doing things you don’t like. Research shows positive emotions make habits stick, so set your intentions on something you enjoy. Another misconception is big results require big changes, which may lead to overly ambitious habits. However, the simpler the routine is, the more likely it is to become habit.

WORK WITH YOUR “BRAIN LOOPS”

Your brain creates “loops” for habits made up of three things: a cue, a routine and a reward. Each time the loop is repeated, it becomes more routine and may become automatic. Knowing this, you can design cues for developing new, healthy habits, such as setting walking shoes by the bed to start a walking habit. The routine is putting on the shoes and walking around the block, and the reward is the pleasant sensations and brighter mood from a morning stroll.

CREATE CUES THAT WORK

Most successful health habits begin with a cue. The cue can be external in your environment or internal in terms of your mindset. The more consistent the cue, the more likely it is to trigger the habit. Hacking your brain’s reminder system can help you remember your cue. Some examples of visual cues are placing a sticky note where you’ll see it often, keeping a water bottle on your desk or refrigerating fresh veggies at eye level.

A ROUTINE FOR GOALS

Positive and consistent habits are important to achieve your personal goals. Small habits done

consistently can add up to big results. To create a new healthy habit, think through the steps that could lead to your desired outcome. Ask yourself whether you want to do it, if it’s easy and if it’s high impact. It’s important to choose habits that make a difference and move you closer to your goals.

For example, if one of your goals is improving your heart health, a meaningful habit might be to move more. Increasing physical activity can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol along with many other health benefits, Gibbs said.

“Every little bit of activity is better than none,” she said. “Even small initial increases of 5-10 minutes a day can yield health benefits.”

USE REWARDS

Start by choosing a habit you enjoy that’s rewarding by itself. If you’re more of a dancer than runner, increase your physical activity with an upbeat dance class. You might also look for a more enjoyable version of a new habit, such as getting more fruits and veggies by sipping on a delicious smoothie.

RESETS ARE PART OF THE PROCESS

New habits are experiments. If they don’t stick, you haven’t failed. Instead, you’ve learned what doesn’t work, which is useful. Get curious and ask yourself which part of the habit didn’t work for you. Maybe the cue was ineffective. Maybe the steps of the routine were too ambitious and you need to split them into smaller, easier steps. If you realize you don’t enjoy the habit, stop doing it and try something else.

Find more inspiration and ideas to jumpstart healthy habits this year at heart.org/habits.



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Top three financial resolutions for uncertain times

STORY BY BRANDPOINT
PHOTO BY ADOBESTOCK



While preparing to ring in the new year, many Americans make resolutions about their finances. Unfortunately, some are feeling less optimistic about the year ahead, according to Fidelity Investments' 2023 New Year's Financial Resolutions Study. Over one-third say they're in worse financial shape than last year, and only 65% believe they'll be better off in 2023. The good news? About half say they're ready to "live sensibly" or "plan ahead," making practical financial resolutions focusing on balancing short-term and long-term goals. Two-thirds of the survey respondents (66%) are considering a financial resolution for 2023.

What financial resolutions are Americans making?

Of those planning a financial New Year's resolution, 94% say they're approaching it differently, given the events of the last couple of years, focusing on practicality — with nearly half (45%) considering more conservative goals for the year ahead.

The top financial resolutions are:

1. Save more money (39%)
2. Pay down debt (32%)
3. Spend less money (28%)

For the first time in the study's 14-year history, more Americans resolve to save for short-term goals rather than long-term goals. Next generation savers (ages 18-35) are evenly split, with 50% saving for the short-term and 50% taking a longer view. Among those making financial resolutions, the top motivations are "achieving greater peace of mind" and "living a debt-free life."

INFLATION'S IMPACT

Inflation was cited as the top financial setback experienced in 2022, and its impact is expected to continue. In fact, respondents ranked it their top financial concern for 2023.

Among those experiencing a financial setback in the past year, 44% had to dip into their emergency fund. Millennials led the way in this regard, with more than half (55%) reporting being forced to take this action. Additionally, 4 out of 10 (43%) Baby Boomers say they and their family are in worse shape financially compared to last year, possibly in part due to declining retirement balances.

POSITIVE PRACTICES

While 2022 presented challenges, the study also reveals encouraging news: More people express having a positive relationship with money. When asked to describe their expectations for 2023, 29% describe their outlook for next year as "the year of living sensibly." Encouragingly, nearly half (49%) expect to maintain savings habits developed during the pandemic, and a similar number (46%) plan to get more involved in charitable giving in 2023.

"Even if your focus is on immediate needs, long-term goals and objectives are what keep us going - and planning can help," said Stacey Watson, senior vice president of Life Event Planning, Fidelity Investments. "Taking charge of your financial situation is a great way to help you feel a sense of control, even when external forces bring challenges. Saving more and paying down debt, even small amounts, can have a tremendous impact on a household's financial and emotional well-being."

STICKING WITH RESOLUTIONS

How can Americans resolve to build a stronger financial future in the new year? To start, those in better financial shape this year reported saving more, budgeting better and/or working more hours. In fact, over 80% of Americans say having a plan can help them deal with the unexpected. Making resolutions is a great way to start the year on the right foot.

GET HELP

Want to plan and set achievable financial resolutions? Help is just a click away. Fidelity's online resource, Life Events hub, was created to help anyone, Fidelity customer or not, plan for and manage life's significant moments. You can find checklists and resources for situations including job changes, caring for loved ones, divorce and navigating the college journey.

No matter what your focus, Fidelity can help you create a free, flexible plan for whatever matters most to you at [Fidelity.com/freeplan](https://www.fidelity.com/freeplan). In January during Financial Wellness month, the company offers 31 days of educational events, financial tips and interactive tools to inspire you to kick off the new year with a renewed focus on finances.

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A new year is here, so it's time to brainstorm resolutions and goals for 2023. If you've made resolutions in the past and haven't stuck to them, you might be discouraged from even trying to make one for the coming year. It's likely that the goals you picked weren't attainable or sustainable for your life.

Instead of making lofty promises that are unachievable, start with small, modest changes that you can accomplish and build upon in years to come. Not sure where to start? Check out these five achievable goals for 2023.

1. Learn or resume a hobby

If you don't have a hobby or have let it go by the wayside, dedicate some time this year to doing something you enjoy. Hobbies aren't just activities we do for fun. They can have huge mental and physical health benefits.

According to VeryWell Mind, enjoyable activities can help you reduce stress, lower blood pressure and combat depression. You don't have to engage in your hobbies every day to reap the benefits. One study showed that engaging in a physical leisure activity for 20 minutes a week helped people feel less fatigued.

Whether you get back into knitting or playing guitar or pick up a new hobby like painting or ballroom dancing, you're carving out time for yourself that can take your mind off the stresses of everyday life.

2. Move your body

This year, make it a goal to get your body moving. That doesn't mean you have to exercise every day for hours at a time. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults need 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week. That may sound like a lot, but it breaks down to 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

Take it slow if you're new to working out or it's been a while since you've exercised. You can even break up 30 minutes of daily activity into smaller chunks. For example, you can do 10 minutes of brisk walking or aerobic exercises three times a day or 15 minutes twice a day. By breaking up your movement goal into smaller chunks, you can naturally find breaks throughout your day to get moving.

3. Invest in your health

If you want to live a long healthy life, you need to invest in your health. Nicole Avena, associate professor of

Neuroscience, Mount Sinai School of Medicine and Author of Why Diets Fail says, "In addition to a healthy and balanced diet and getting an adequate amount of exercise, it's important to cover all your bases like adding daily vitamins to your health regimen. Each person's dietary needs will vary slightly. While most people can get enough from diet alone, others may need to take a supplement, and nowadays, there are many vitamin options for men and women of all ages."

To ensure that you receive essential nutrients, consider taking a daily multivitamin like vitafusion MultiVites which is an excellent source of 12 vitamins and minerals.

4. Mindfulness

You've probably heard about mindfulness, but do you know what it is and its benefits? Simply put, mindfulness is being aware and fully present in your body, mind and environment. According to the National Institutes of Health, practicing mindfulness can have several positive impacts on your health and well-being, including reducing anxiety and depression, lowering blood pressure and improving sleep.

A popular way to practice mindfulness is meditation, but it's not the only way. You can practice breathing or grounding exercises, go on a walk or take stock of how your body is feeling in the present moment. Mindfulness practices can be short or long, but to start, you can carve out five minutes a day in the morning or at night to get in touch with your awareness.

5. Improve your finances

A common New Year's resolution is to be better about saving and spending. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), 72% of adults report feeling stressed about money at least some of the time. While there isn't a one-size-fits-all plan for improving your financial well-being, there are simple ways to assess your finances and target areas for improvement.

In January, track all your income and expenses. You can do this by using an expense sheet, or you can download an app to make things easier. Once you know where your money is coming from and where it's going, you can identify areas where you could be spending less and saving more and set financial goals for the year.

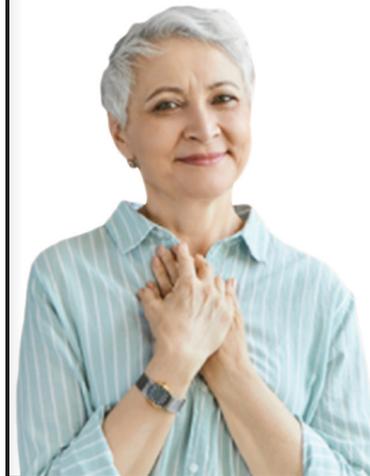
LIFESTYLE

NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS

5 resolutions for 2023

STORY BY BRANDPOINT

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SIMPLICITY, PATIENCE

Give yourself a break as you adopt healthy eating habits

STORY BY JENN WILLHITE

PHOTO BY ADOBESTOCK

Resolving to eat healthier in 2023 doesn't have to devolve into yet another futile effort to make positive, permanent change. The key to success lies in approaching healthy eating with simplicity, while allowing for patience and grace with one's self, say area experts.

Keeping the resolution to eat healthier starts with your sleep. Avoid sleep deprivation, cautions Kate Velazquez, outpatient registered dietician with St. Francis Hospital.

"Make sure you are well rested and getting the proper amount of sleep each night because, honestly, that sets the tone for everything," Velazquez says. "When we have a lack of or poor sleep that leads to a lot of bad decisions the next day."

Waking feeling as if you haven't slept fuels unhealthy cravings for things like carbs and sugar, which can offer a quick energetic boost but bad consequences on the back end of that sugar high.

"When you feed your body the right combination of nutrients in the morning, you tend to do better the rest of the day," Velazquez

says. "It sets the tone."

Just like starting any new habit, settling into healthy eating habits takes time. Clearly define your goal and the reason you want to accomplish it, Velazquez recommends. After that, it is simply a matter of consistency tempered with patience and grace.

Sticking with a goal boosts our confidence, says Caitlyn Wong, registered dietician with Community Health Network in Indianapolis, and that positively affects our mental and physical health.

"When you feel better in your body and you are sticking to those goals, it just compounds how good you feel," Wong says.

Enthusiastically making a positive change is admirable, but intending to turn decades' worth of bad habits around overnight is not how long-term change lasts, she cautions.

"You want to think as painfully simple, small goal as possible," Wong says. "So, it feels effortless and can be repeated."

Combine manageable goals with moderation and balance and you're well on your way to success, she adds.

When setting healthy dietary goals, take habitual vices into account.

For instance, coffee lovers who can't function without a big cup of caffeine first thing in the morning don't necessarily need to forgo that jolt of energy upon waking, but rather introduce balance. And water.

"Can you manage that vice a bit by maybe first having 16 ounces of water before coffee?" Wong says. "Instead of taking away everything, if you can add in a new habit that very painlessly crowds out that vice, that is the balance. It doesn't have to be all or nothing and I think that is where people really miss the mark."

Give yourself some grace, she adds.

Water in its natural state may not excite the tastebuds, but it is powerfully beneficial. Especially when paired with eating better.

Consider the adage "garbage in, garbage out." The same holds true with the human body.

"We know that fruits and vegetables are a no-brainer," Wong says. "If you can keep it simple by remembering to get a fruit or vegetable at every single meal you are on the right path."

"Increasing fruits and vegetables increases the amount of daily fiber you are consuming. Add water to that and you are going to have more regular bowel movements and you should feel physically better within one week."

Adding more intentional movement, whether that means increasing your steps each day or including an exercise routine, further helps the body detoxify and establish a healthier homeostasis.

"Your mind and body are 100 percent connected and we want them to be that way," Wong says. "What tends to happen is when you feel better, you want to do those things that make you feel better. That slow approach is what is so important because it feels like a natural transition rather than forcing something square into a round hole."

The benefits of healthy eating extend well beyond one's waistline and mental outlook, it can literally help turn bad health around.

Consuming appropriate portions of healthy foods help regulate blood sugar, Velazquez says.

"Pairing a lean source of protein with a healthy carbohydrate is going to help stabilize blood sugar," Velazquez says. "When our blood sugar is more stable, we feel better and have more energy and the body becomes more well-regulated."

Shopping for healthy foods can certainly be overwhelming with all the labels touting low and reduced fats and sugars, however, to cut down on confusion and spare yourself the stress, shop the perimeter of the store, recommends Audra Nicholls, owner of Country Nutrition in Greenwood.

When possible, avoid processed foods, which is essentially anything that comes in a package.

"Processed foods are very broken down and create reactions in our bodies," Nicholls says. "And that contributes to the increase in free-radicals and other ill-effects within the body."

Food labels can be difficult to decipher. However, if you must go with refined products, check the sugar content. Ideally, you should get no more than 25 grams of sugar a day. In recent years, food labeling requires a breakdown of total and added sugars, Wong says.

Wong recommends her patients keep their added sugars under 10 grams, when possible, but if you can get less than five grams that is even better, she says.

"I venture to say most people get 25 grams of sugar just in their breakfast," Wong says. "Remember, your goal is for the entire day."

Sodium is another biggie that when consumed in excess contributes to an array of ill-health effects, including water retention, high blood pressure and obesity. Ideally, keep sodium to less than 2,300 mg a day.

Utilize evidence-based resources when searching for nutritional information online. Wong recommends eatright.org, which is offered by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Take baby steps. Exercise patience. And be forgiving with yourself when you slip.

"It is never too late, and you can always start again with another goal," Wong says.



5 ways to manage your weight

STORY BY FAMILY FEATURES

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

For many people who wish to work toward a healthier weight, one of the greatest obstacles is figuring out where to begin.

These tips from SlimFast consultant and registered dietitian Maryann Walsh show it doesn't take a drastic lifestyle overhaul to make an impact.

EAT MINDFULLY

Many people who struggle with their weight benefit from being more conscious about what they're eating and why. For example, consider your eating habits, such as eating even when you're not hungry whether that's because it's mealtime and you think you should eat, you're satisfying a craving or using a tasty snack to cope with stress.

Recognizing why you're eating is an important step toward correcting destructive eating patterns, but so is paying attention to the other details of the eating experience, including what you eat and how it makes you feel. Ultimately, this may allow you to choose healthier foods that nourish your body for the long-term, rather than the brief satisfaction that comes with less nutritious choices.

CONSIDER INTERMITTENT FASTING

One weight-loss method many people find success using is intermittent fasting, which involves abstaining from all food and beverages for a specified time period each day or week. While going too long without food can sometimes lead to excess hunger then overeating later, in shorter, controlled fasting timeframes one can often more easily achieve a caloric deficit, which is required for weight loss.

Prepare for your fasting phase by choosing foods that support satiety. Options like SlimFast's Intermittent Fasting line of meal bars

and protein shakes can help avoid a sense of deprivation.

MANAGE STRESS

When you're stressed, your body produces cortisol, which also raises insulin and can drive hunger and trigger cravings for comfort foods. In fact, that's the very reason people tend to overeat when they're under pressure. Light exercise and meditative practices can help you manage your mental strain. You might also consider talk therapy with a friend or professional or spend time unwinding with a book or music.

GET PROPER SLEEP

Poor sleep habits affect your weight in numerous ways. One is that when you're feeling tired, your hunger and satiety hormones, ghrelin and leptin, can be affected, leading to an increase in caloric intake and subsequent weight gain. Additionally, when you're tired, you're more likely to take shortcuts like skipping workouts or opting for unhealthy convenience foods. All are reasons to make better rest a bigger priority.

TRACK EATING AND EXERCISE

When you're not paying attention to what you eat and how you move, you may not even realize how your habits are affecting your health. Logging what you eat, especially if you use a tool like an app that helps you see the nutrition breakdown, may give you a clearer idea of the quality and quantity of your intake. Similarly, when you're specifically writing down the time you're committing to physical activity, you'll find it easier to identify patterns and pinpoint where you can make adjustments to increase your exercise.



GET OUTTA TOWN!

Vacations are fun and benefit our mental outlook

STORY BY JENN WILLHITE

PHOTOS BY ADOBESTOCK

As 2022 fades into the rearview, there's no better time to make those long-term travel plans a reality, not only for the fun of it but for the benefit of your overall health and well-being.

Elaine Pesto, owner of Sapphire Seas Travel in Whiteland, says people often don't make time for themselves, but once they realize the benefits, they know it is worth it in the end.

Time away from the stressors of everyday life, whether it be an overnight jaunt or a week-long getaway, can positively impact one's psychological well-being, which, in turn, benefits physical health.

Pesto credits people's recent hesitancy to get out and explore with some of the negative press associated with living in a post-COVID world.

"I think we really have to get past COVID and that it be a past memory," Pesto says. "How we travel now is different than how we used to."

In recent months, Pesto says the number of people who are waiting to travel is lessening.

"We have to continue to be smart about what we do," she says. "Even if we are in a COVID time, we should always be cautious when it comes to our health, but sometimes you can't wait and you just gotta go."

Travel agent Cathy Burrows, with Caldwell Travel in Greenwood,

says while growing up her father always said, "You have to have a vacation every year." And that is life advice she took to heart and tries to pass on to her clients.

"You have to go and unplug," she says. "You have to relax and enjoy life."

In many cases, when people travel, they are spending time with their family or friends and that allows time to catch up, nurture and, even possibly, rekindle those relationships, Pesto says.

When advising clients, Pesto also makes it a point to recommend they put the phone away and relax. And if you are visiting a sunny destination, like the beach, there is the added benefit of sun therapy - vitamin D works wonders for boosting our health, she adds.

"Also, when you plan a vacation, it is something to look forward to," Pesto says. "That keeps you excited, motivated and gives you something to work toward."

If you are considering planning a vacation, the sooner you get the process started the better.

Using the services of an experienced travel agent can take the hassle out of the planning and booking processes, especially for those who are first-time vacationers. It also helps lessen the fatigue that tends to take over after hours spent online researching destination and travel options, Pesto says.

“A lot of times, people will book online and think it is a really good deal,” Pesto says. “But there are too many ifs, such as a lack of good reviews. People don’t come to me for the best deal, they come to me for the best vacation.”

Using a travel agent can also score you various discounts and access to flights that aren’t always published, Pesto adds. And there is the added benefit of the agent’s own travel experience vacationers can lean into.

“I travel a lot and I have experienced many of the destinations I book frequently,” Pesto says. “I can help walk them through and visualize what the trip is going to look like for them. It is a lot of handholding, which people aren’t used to having, and they really enjoy it.”

Cruises are a good option for vacationers, since they don’t require full payment upfront, Burrows says. Travelers pay a deposit to reserve their space and the rest can be paid over time before the ship sails.

Burrows recommends vacationers make a list of the things they want to see and do on the trip. A destination doesn’t have to be extravagant or even outside of the country. There is a plethora of wonderful destinations domestically, she says.

“Travel is good for the soul,” Pesto says. “Go explore the world, it is open. And they’re waiting for us to come visit.”



Explore what’s influencing travel trends in 2023

STORY BY FAMILY FEATURES

Immediately following the COVID-19 lockdown in the United States, outdoor and drivable destinations were in big demand for domestic travelers. As the country has reopened, Americans embraced the idea of getting back to normal and began traveling much as they did prior to the pandemic.

However, travel trends on the horizon for 2023 suggest there is no normal when it comes to travel planning. Instead, individual interests are driving decisions about where to go and what to do.

“We see a detailed and robust picture of travel into 2023,” Expedia Brands President Jon Gieselman said. “We’re seeing a surge in trips to culture capitals, a new wave of interest in wellness retreats and a spike in demand for outdoor destinations beyond just beaches and mountains. It’s not a new normal so much as people branching out to unexpected trends in what we’re calling the ‘no normal.’”

A close look at these trends suggests there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to travel in 2023. Insights sourced from the company’s first-party data, and from custom research of thousands of travelers and industry professionals across 17 countries, show personal interests and pop culture are heavily influencing travel choices.

Consider these conclusions from the experts at Expedia:



SET-JETTERS

Booking a trip after bingeing a popular series will become serious business in 2023. Research confirms streamed movies and TV shows are now the top sources of travel inspiration (40%), outpacing the influence of social media (31%). Furthermore, the small screen is now considered on par with recommendations from friends and family when it comes to travel inspiration.

In the U.S., more than two-thirds (68%) of travelers considered visiting a destination after seeing

it in a show or movie on a streaming platform, and a whopping 61% went ahead and booked a trip. Top set-jetter destinations include New Zealand, with its landscapes featured in one of this year’s most epic series, followed by the United Kingdom, Paris, New York and the beach resorts of Hawaii.

CULTURE CAPITALS

National parks and rural retreats had big moments the past couple of years. Now, cities are seeing a comeback. Based on traveler demand, most of the destinations seeing the largest increases are culture-rich cities where art and culture festivities are back in full swing. Examples include the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, WorldPride in Sydney and the cherry blossoms in Tokyo.

Culture capitals that are calling loudest include:

- Edinburgh, Scotland
- Lisbon, Portugal
- Tokyo
- Dublin
- New York
- Sydney
- Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Montreal
- Munich
- Bangkok



Emily Cline, MD
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