

Healthy New Year's Resolutions Anyone?

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Polk Fit Fresh and Friendly wishes you a happy, healthy New Year and hopes that many of you are making a New Year's Resolution to continue to eat healthy and be physically active.

Many people set goals that focus too much on end results instead of the process. As much as losing weight is a popular resolution, it's not a great goal to set. That's why goals that focus on your behaviors, not outcomes, are more effective.

Last fall, over 300 people participated in our Polk Fit Challenge that focused on just one behavior, physical activity. In our post-Fit Challenge survey we found that over 90% of our participants liked tracking their activity online and found that the Fit Challenge made them more mindful of being active. Participants reported an increase in physical activity during the challenge and over 96% reported that they would continue to be active 3-5 or more times a week.

We decided to follow-up on a few of our Fit Challenge participants to hear about their successes and plans to continue physical activity in the New Year. According to the 2016 State of Polk County Health Report, only 49% of Polk County's residents meet recommended physical activity requirements.

Polk Fit Challenge participant Barbara, told us there was no such thing as a New Years' Resolution. It's all about goals and life changes. She has been working with a nutritionist and changed the way she eats and thinks about food. Barbara says, "Our society uses food as entertainment. It should only be used as sustaining our bodies. If you go to a restaurant, ask for a calorie count menu. It will scare you and make you realize how fattening going out to eat is." Barbara is also limiting portions and experimenting with low-calorie spices to flavor her foods. She also said, "You don't have to be a huge exercise buff to lose weight, but some form of activity is a good thing to incorporate into your goals."

Wanangwa says she is trying to stay more active than before the Polk Fit Challenge and her New Year's resolution is to continue exercising each day.

Mary Ann says she doesn't usually make resolutions but she is trying to remember her goals to eat healthy food, get enough sleep, and balance her life with exercise, rest and fun.

Amy enjoyed getting together with her neighbors to walk during the Polk Fit Challenge and reports remaining active since the Challenge. She has not made a New Year's Resolution but wants to "slow down on the hand to mouth intake. LOL."

Rachael says she has joined a gym and hopes to wear out a pair of athletic shoes this year.

Warren said, "I have a loving spouse who is into physical fitness and wants only the best for her hubby. Her plans are to feed me only good foods, adjust my diet, and improve my cardio. It is a blessing to have such a supportive and loving wife!"

So good luck on your New Year's Resolutions and we recommend you pick one or two small changes that you are ready to tackle and you can start right now. Keep yourself motivated by thinking about why this change is important to you and how it will affect your life. Write down your motivations and your desired outcomes to refer to when you feel like giving up.

Polk Fit Fresh and Friendly would like to publicly thank our major sponsor, Polk Community Foundation for their financial support of the Polk Fit Challenge. We would also like to thank St. Luke's Hospital, Pro Therapy Fitness, Advanced Wellness, Main Street Financial Group, Tryon Seventh Day Adventist Church, TD Bank and Ageless Grace Health Program for their sponsorship and support that brought the community together to focus on healthy behavior.

Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly (PF3) is a group of 80+ community members, leaders and health professionals, all working together to plan and implement effective strategies to promote wellness in our community. We welcome any individual who is interested in joining us to make our community a healthier place for all. For more information and a list of our 2018 meeting dates, please visit our website at www.polkfitfreshandfriendly.org.