

**HEALTH News**

**Stick to your guns on New Year's resolutions with these tips**



FLORINE MARK

Okay, you've been trying really hard to stick to those New Year's resolutions to lose weight for over a week now. How's it going? Did you know that over half of the New Year's resolutions will be history by Feb. 17. Instead of joining those who will not succeed, why not try the following:

- **Psyche yourself up** — Look at yourself closely in front of a full-length mirror. Weigh yourself at least once a week and take pictures of your progress.
- **Think yourself thin** — Close your eyes for 30 seconds and picture yourself in shape. Do it every day for a month until it becomes a habit and soon your subconscious will send back healthy urges.
- **Go shopping** — Buy a new outfit for spring. Why not try a new style you've never worn before?
- **Be good to yourself** — This time of year often brings an emotional letdown. To cheer yourself up, treat yourself to a manicure or a massage instead of meeting a friend for lunch.
- **Sometimes the road to your chosen weight contains twists, turns and bumps that you don't expect.** What would happen if you expected to lose 60 pounds in six months and only lost 20?
- **Knowing what to expect along the road to your weight goal can be the difference between completing the journey and giving up.** The fog stopped Florence Chadwick from completing her trip across the channel only because she thought land was further away than it actually was. She had the wrong expectation. The second go around was different because she knew

what to expect. Accurate expectations enabled her to persist until she reached her goal.

Many people who lose weight and keep it off seem to experience certain stages along the way. Knowing what these stages are can help us know better what to expect. Knowing what to expect can enable us to persist in our efforts to reach our goals, even when we can't see them clearly or judge how close or far away we are.

- **The honeymoon stage** — During this stage you are totally committed. You watch and record every morsel of food that enters your mouth and you exercise regularly.
- **The thrill is gone stage** — This

second stage can best be described as "frustrating." You wonder why you have to be so careful. Why can your "skinny" friends eat anything they want and stay thin? It isn't fair! You are tempted to throw in the towel.

• **The renewed resolve stage** — The third stage involves a renewal of your commitment or resolve to get to your chosen weight. It's when you have a clearer and more realistic set of expectations about how the process works. This leads to a more peaceful resolution to complete the rest of the journey. You've come to terms with the fact that neither you nor the road to your chosen weight has to be perfect. There will be setbacks and detours and the whole process

takes a certain amount of time. The quickest route doesn't necessarily lead to long-term success.

• **Lifestyle change stage** — This final stage is when you continue to pursue your new eating, weight-monitoring and exercise habits even if you've experienced a "bad" day or week. In this stage, you have feelings of confidence about getting to your chosen weight and staying there. You're unwilling to go back to old habits.

Understanding the current stage and anticipating the next stage of your weight-loss journey is comparable to Florence Chadwick's accurate anticipation of how far away she was from the California coast, even in the presence of the fog. It made all the difference in the

world in whether she persisted in pursuing her goal or not. On-target expectations of the challenges coming up can make all the difference in the world. Your attitude is paramount in your efforts to reach your chosen weight goal.

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