

# The TOPS Reminder

A newsletter for Western Massachusetts Counties

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Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and a Happy Healthy 2014 to all of you and your families!!!!

Ways TOPS groups donated, celebrated and share good times while helping others.

## MA 0211 CHICOPEE

Our chapter signed Christmas cards for the people in the nursing home. Some were the regular patients and others were there for rehab. We were just going to pass out cards but they asked us to sing. There ended up being only 3 of us of but when an elderly woman opened her card and saw a cat and told us about her cat made all our efforts worth it.

## Chapter 0451 Pittsfield

Instead of having a party and buying each other gifts they decided to help a soldier. A son of one of the member's was stationed in Afghanistan. During one chapter meeting they

packed 2 large boxes. This chapter made one squad very happy.

## MA 0412 Westfield

Every week members bring in can goods/non perishable good into the weight room after they weigh in they weigh the food that they are going donate. Last year they donated over 1000 pounds to the Westfield food bank. This year they have 900 pounds and hope to reach 1000lbs.again.

Instead of exchanging gifts they donated money to save the cats in Westfield.

## RESUME WORKSHOP

January 4th I will hold a resume workshop at 75 Wells Street, Greenfield at the Mill House. Registration starts at 9 and we will begin at 9:30. Please plan on attending last year my area would have had another division winner if the resume was sent in on time. This year let's try to have everyone receive what they deserve. I will bring a copier, if you want copies for 5 cents

a page. There will be a charge for the workshop to pay for the mailing.

## MA 0229 North Adams

Each member brought in a Christmas tree ornament. All members stand in a circle and someone reads the story of The Right Family and when the story is over the ornament you have in your hand is the one you keep

## MA 0411 Westfield

The chapter adopts a family from the Salvation Army. The group counts off so each child and the mother will be happy on Christmas morning. The chapter has been doing this for many years.

## Remember

With baby steps you can climb any mountain to your goal!



Terri



RITE  
GIRLS BITE OUT



Fast-food menus are cram-packed with fattening flops, but there are also some real guilt-free finds out there! Here are some of our top picks...



### McDonald's Egg White Delight McMuffin

1 sandwich: 250 calories, 7g fat, 770mg sodium, 30g carbs, 4g fiber, 3g sugars, 18g protein -- **PointsPlus®** value 6\*

We've given plenty of love to the always-good Fruit 'N Yogurt Parfait, and we still adore it. But it's time to let this new egg-white-stuffed sandwich shine! With naturally lean Canadian bacon, white cheddar cheese, and a whole-grain English muffin, this b-fast option rocks...

### Burger King Tendergrill Chicken Sandwich (No Mayo)

1 sandwich without mayo: 320 calories, 5g fat, 750mg sodium, 38g carbs, 2g fiber, 6g sugars, 31g protein -- **PointsPlus®** value 8\*

Confession time: We REALLY like the grilled chicken at BK. But this sandwich requires a little tweak... Leaving off the mayo saves 90 calories and 11g fat. Wow! Go for ketchup and/or mustard instead. And make sure you order the Tendergrill, NOT the fried Tendercrisp. [More Burger King strategies](#) are just a click away...





### Subway Double Chicken Chopped Salad with Avocado

1 salad with avocado and sweet onion dressing: 380 calories, 10g fat, 730mg sodium, 38g carbs, 6g fiber, 25g sugars, 37g protein -- **PointsPlus®** value 10\*

Hello -- DOUBLE CHICKEN. This salad is pretty much a protein party! And we understand the importance of healthy fats, which is why we add a little avocado. As for dressing, the fat-free sweet onion is outrageously good.

### Wendy's Jr. Cheeseburger Deluxe (No Mayo)

1 burger without mayo: 300 calories, 13g fat, 800mg sodium, 27g carbs, 2g fiber, 7g sugars, 17g protein -- **PointsPlus®** value 8\*

On the go and craving a cheeseburger? This is one of your best bets. We LOVE that it's petite yet topped with a stack of fresh veggies. And nixing the mayo saves 50 calories and 6g fat. We'd rather put those calories toward a sensible side dish or a small Frosty! Read our full [Wendy's Survival Guide](#) for more need-to-know info.



### Taco Bell Fresco Chicken Soft Taco

1 taco: 140 calories, 3.5g fat, 470mg sodium, 16g carbs, 2g fiber, 2g sugars, 10g protein -- **PointsPlus®** value 3\*

How great is the Fresco menu? So great! You can have two of these tacos for 280 calories and 7g fat (**PointsPlus®** value 7\*). Add an 80-calorie side of black beans, and you'll be totally satisfied. Check out our [Taco Bell Survival Guide](#) for more great options, like the Fresco Burrito Supreme!



### Carl's Jr. Turkey Burger (No Mayo)

1 burger without mayo: 380 calories, 10g fat, 880mg sodium, 45g carbs, 3g fiber, 10g sugars, 29g protein -- **PointsPlus®** value 10\*

A turkey burger might sound like a no-brainer, but failing to special order it without mayo would cost you an extra 110 calories and 12g fat. Ditch that fatty goo, and don't look back! This sandwich also has a special sauce, so you don't have to worry about lack of flavor. And if bunless is more your style, you can "Low Carb It" and get CJ sandwiches wrapped in lettuce leaves. Pssst... The Hardee's version of



this burger has 390 calories *with* the mayo. Not bad! Skip the mayo to save some fat.

With last minute shopping for gifts for your family you sometimes forget to take care of yourself. Before leaving try to eat a meal with protein, it will give you stamina to fight the crowd without getting stressed. The above fast food restaurants are good choices to eat at to stay on program.

Same goes for grocery shopping; whenever you go shopping you never want to go shopping hungry. We have all done it and we come home with food we don't need because it "looks" good.

Remember the reason for the season; we can have sugar cookies, fruit cake, (yum) peppermint bark anytime of the year. Many times the holidays are the only time the entire family gets together try to concentrate on them and not the snack food. Choose a few treats and enjoy! Remember YOU are worth it.



# **New Year's Resolutions That Are Bad Ideas**

## **Overview**

Have you made your New Year's resolution yet? It's that time of year when people are creating their lists of vows to stop bad habits and to start positive ones. Individuals have long embarked on the quest for self-improvement at the beginning of the New Year to varying degrees of success. From dieting and fitness to relationships and finances, before you pen your list of New Year's resolutions, read on to learn how to avoid setting up your mind, body or soul for failure.

## **Fixating on a Number on the Scale**

Don't get caught up in the numbers game. Setting your sights on a do-or-die weight number can create problems. Not only do you risk feeling discouraged if you don't hit the ideal weight as quickly as you'd like, but if you've also started an exercise program, you are likely losing fat and gaining muscle at the same time. "As you are building lean muscle and reducing your overall body fat, you may notice the number on the scale staying static or actually increasing," says Ashley Yandle, fitness expert and owner of Ashley Lane Fitness. Instead of focusing on reaching that magic number on the scale, create resolutions that center around inches lost or fitting into a certain (realistic) size of jeans or dress.

## **Vague Resolutions to "Be Better" at Something**

Becoming "better"-- at just about anything -- is a resolution that sounds great in theory but can set you up for failure. Betsy Sobiech, personal growth and development expert and founding partner of Tiara International, LLC, warns goal makers to be careful of the "er" trap. "Get healthier. Be better. Work harder. These are potential traps because they can never be accomplished," says Sobiech. "You won't know when you have accomplished enough or have reached your milestone." Instead, craft a goal that will clearly demonstrate that this area of life is important. For example, you could replace a resolution such as, "be a better friend," with "send handmade birthday cards" or "plan that girls' weekend away."

## **Resolutions to Get Married**

If your partner has been dragging his or her feet about getting married, resolving to give them an ultimatum to ensure that 2014 includes a walk down the aisle could backfire. Personal growth and development expert Betsy Sobiech warns that you might think you are just being clear and strong about your goals when you give ultimatums, but it could do more harm than good. "Ultimatums generally put people on the defensive," says Sobiech. "The choices people make under this kind of pressure are typically not in line with the overall best decision." A more productive resolution could be to work with your partner this year to determine if your values and goals are ultimately in line with each other's.

## **Resolving to Eliminate Carbohydrates or Fats**

Some of today's popular diet trends instruct you to eliminate carbohydrates or fats from your diet. Ashley Yandle, fitness expert and owner of Ashley Lane Fitness, doesn't recommend taking it to this extreme. "We need carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats to build a lean and healthy body," says Yandle. "By eliminating carbohydrates you can starve your body of energy it needs to function." Instead of cutting carbs out altogether, incorporate healthy ones like sweet potatoes, oatmeal, quinoa, brown rice and low-sodium rice cakes to fuel your body and build muscle. The same goes with fats. Don't cut fats out of your diet; instead, choose foods with healthy fats like olive oil, avocados and nuts to help you feel satisfied and full.

## **Everything Organized**

Sounds good on the surface -- organization is a positive attribute after all. But this goal is vague and vast. Committing to organizing your entire life is pretty ambitious. "Consider the continuum of your life," says Jean Costa-McCutcheon, psychotherapist, life coach and owner of Potentia Counseling and Coaching. "Think about how you might make smaller, more 'chunked down' changes." Instead of a blanket commitment to organizing all aspects of your life, decide that you will clean one cabinet at home or one desk drawer at work a week. The trick is to make the goal specific and achievable enough that you don't get discouraged and give up altogether.

## **Join a Gym (If You Hate the Gym)**

Some New Year's goal-setters may think that just belonging to a gym will inspire them to workout constantly, even if they hate the gym. However, Michelle Babb, MS, RD, nutritionist and owner of Eat.Play.Be. warns that a consistent exercise schedule can be difficult enough without trying to drag yourself to the gym if you just don't like being there. "Find some type of physical activity that helps you feel strong and confident in your body," says Babb. "You'll be much more likely to exercise regularly." Recall activities you've enjoyed in the past and focus on those. Go ice skating, bicycling, roller blading, hiking or take a dance or swim class.

## **Setting a Deadline for Weight Goals**

Date-specific resolutions may seem less vague, but focusing on an end date for reaching a perfect weight could put stress and pressure on you and backfire if you don't meet your goal by that day. Instead, consider revising your goal to focus on sustainable behaviors that will help you achieve weight loss. Examples of these types of goals are aiming to work out four times a week or increasing the number of servings of fruits and vegetables in your diet by three each day. Look at the big picture and cut it down into small resolutions that support the end goal. Start tracking your food and exercise using a tool, like LIVESTRONG's MyPlate.

## **Unrealistic Training Goals**

When it comes to setting a training goal for yourself, consider your current physical condition, advises personal trainer, nutrition coach and owner of MissFIT, Kayla Pevehouse. For example, if you can barely walk a mile, don't resolve to run a marathon. Start small, and work your way up to more lofty goals. For the non-runner who wants to start running, Pevehouse recommends a "couch to 5k" program and then progressing from there. "If you jump right into an intense training program without the proper conditioning beforehand, you are not only setting yourself up for failure on your resolution, but also potentially for a major injury," says Pevehouse.

## **Recycling Old Resolutions**

Perhaps you have a list of unchecked goals from last year. Be cautious about recycling those for this year. Betsy Sobiech, personal growth and development expert and founding partner of Tiara International, LLC, encourages you to ask yourself if it is really going to happen or if you are setting yourself up for failure again. This is even more significant if the goal has made the list for several years in a row. Sobiech says you might want to consider giving yourself a break and focusing on something else instead. "If you really want this to be the year, make sure you have done the internal work on your motivation and mindset to truly go for it," she says. "Also, put in place the outside support you need to get started right away."

## **Outlawing Splurges**

It's hard to make the "nice" list all the time. Allow yourself to be "naughty" every so often. Deprivation could set you up for a binge later. Fitness expert Ashley Yandle suggests following an 80/20 rule when it comes to eating healthy. Eat clean 80% of the time, and permit yourself to have two or three cheat meals a week. Allow yourself to have that glass of wine or cheeseburger here and there, and then get right back on your diet-friendly meal plan. "You need your healthy lifestyle to work with your life," says Yandle. "It doesn't matter how amazing a meal plan and workout regime may be -- if you can't stick with it -- it doesn't do you any good."

## **Vowing to Meditate Every Day**

Meditating can be a beneficial practice to incorporate into your life. However, if this activity is new to you, committing to it -- or anything for that matter -- for a generous amount of time every day might backfire. When you commit to a daily goal, it often doesn't take long before the business of life knocks you off track. You miss one day and you are already behind and may feel that you have failed yourself. "This type of goal often subconsciously reinforces a feeling of disappointment in ourselves and failure to make progress," says Betsy Sobiech, personal growth and development expert. Strive for more realistic goals. In this case, start by committing to meditate just 5 minutes a day, a few days a week. Once you have made that a habit, increase the time and frequency.

## **Only Eating Certain Foods**

The grapefruit diet, the raw food diet, the "one ingredient diet" are all unhealthy trends that involve eating an abundance of the same type of food. Not only do you run the risk of getting bored with this approach, but you'll also miss out on a number of nutrients you get from a well-rounded diet. Kayla Pevehouse, personal trainer, nutrition coach and owner of MissFIT, recommends thinking of food as fuel. Rather than eating massive amounts of "magic" diet foods, learn to understand the foods and portions that will help you reach your specific health goals. "Resolve to eat a well-balanced, whole-foods-based diet, and add color to your meals," says Pevehouse. "Mix it up instead of eating the same things all the time. Avoid processed foods and sugars, but don't avoid specific macronutrients."

## **Negative Resolutions**

Stop drinking coffee. Don't watch television. Avoid eating desserts. Sometimes it's all in the wording. Positioning your resolution negatively can make it harder to achieve. "It's ineffective to word a resolution negatively," says Betsy Sobiech, personal growth and development expert and founding partner of Tiara International, LLC. "It's a self-punishing way to word our goals." When you word your goals negatively, you are focusing all of your attention and energy on the activity you are trying to avoid, which doesn't provide direction or motivation. Instead, Sobiech recommends crafting positive goals such as, "Be healthy enough to run a 5K," or "Start each day with a glass of water." This focuses your attention on moving forward.

## **Resolving to Get A New Job**

Resolutions that are absolute and lack focus may backfire. Obtaining a new job is a great goal, but this goal is out of your hands to some degree. Sure, you can apply and interview all that you want, but it doesn't guarantee you will be hired. The job market fluctuates as does the timing of hiring surges. Putting pressure on yourself to get a new job -- or else -- with no milestones or plan can be overwhelming. Set more manageable, realistic goals. Jean Costa-McCutcheon, professional psychotherapist and life coach, suggests setting a more attainable goal such as networking with one new person or exploring one new career path each week.



CHEW  
Chew the Right Thing



BITE IT!



HG's Candyland Peppermint Pie

### Mint Condition!

Combining the seasonal goodness of peppermint with the year-round goodness of chocolate, this pie is AMAZING. Warning: If you alert your holiday guests that this creamy treat is low in fat and calories, they might fall over and knock down some of your decorations.

### Ingredients:

#### Crust

4 sheets (16 crackers) chocolate graham crackers  
2 tbsp. light whipped butter or light buttery spread (like [Brummel & Brown](#))

#### Filling

1/2 cup fat-free sweetened condensed milk  
1/4 cup fat-free milk  
1 small (4-serving) box Jell-O Sugar Free Fat Free Vanilla Instant pudding mix  
3 cups Cool Whip Free, thawed  
3 tbsp. mini semi-sweet chocolate chips  
2 standard-sized peppermint candy canes, lightly crushed, divided  
Optional topping: Fat Free Reddi-wip

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

To make the crust, crush graham crackers in a food

FIGHT IT!



Candy Cane Pie, Average

### Peppermint Trick...

There's something inherently tricky about minty desserts. They *seem* light. Maybe it's the crisp, fresh bite. Something about the mintiness sends a message to your brain, triggering the response, "This can't be THAT bad for me!" Wrong-O. Candy-cane-inspired pies pop up a lot during the holidays; the kind your aunt whips up from scratch, the ones that someone picks up from Bakers Square... And these desserts usually involve tremendous amounts of sugar, chocolate, and heavy cream -- not to mention the cookie crusts! Here's the thing: There IS a way to enjoy a creamy slice of minty deliciousness, but you've GOT to use our special recipe and make it yourself (or hoodwink some kitchen-savvy friend into making it for you). Our dessert couldn't be more decadent -- fluffy rich filling, chocolatey pieces, that cookie crust, those minty bits... Look at that -- you're getting everything you wanted this year!

**Serving Size: 1 slice**

**Calories: 714**

**Fat: 44g**

**Sodium: 377mg**

**Carbs: 66.5g**

**Fiber: 1.75g**

**Sugars: 54g**

**Protein: 6g**

*PointsPlus® value 19\**



processor or blender (or place in large sealable bag and crush with a meat mallet). Transfer crumbs to a bowl and set aside.

Place butter in a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave until melted, about 15 seconds. Add to the bowl of graham cracker crumbs and mix until uniform.

Spray a pie pan with nonstick spray. Evenly distribute crust mixture along the bottom of the pie pan, using your hands or a flat utensil to firmly press and form the crust. Press it into the edges and up along the sides of the pan.

Bake crust in the oven until firm, 8 - 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

To make the filling, combine condensed milk, milk, and pudding mix in a large bowl. Mix well. Fold in Cool Whip until smooth. Gently stir in chocolate chips and about 3/4 of the candy cane pieces.

Once crust has cooled completely, evenly pour filling into the pan.

Refrigerate until firm and chilled, at least 2 hours. (Overnight is best.)

Sprinkle pie with remaining candy cane pieces. If you like, top with Reddi-wip just before serving. Dig in!

**MAKES 8 SERVINGS**

**Serving Size: 1 slice (1/8th of pie)**

**Calories: 202**

**Fat: 4.5g**

**Sodium: 250mg**

**Carbs: 37g**

**Fiber: 0.25g**

**Sugars: 24g**

**Protein: 2.5g**

*PointsPlus® value 5\**