

A Kinder New Year's Weight Loss Resolution

It is OK.... everyone breathe; it is here again; the beginning of a New Year and countless resolutions or goals to lose weight. Remember that our weight loss journeys are honorable pursuits and a great way to care for our health and ourselves. Here are some things to keep in mind if you are planning to take off pounds this year.

How much do I need to lose? We know that even as little as 5% of body weight loss is shown to reduce risks of chronic disease like Type II Diabetes and Heart Disease. For someone that is 200 pounds...that's 10 pounds of weight loss. That amount is realistic, it is attainable, and very likely to improve your health. More importantly, you show yourself that you are capable of weight loss, that those changes you made to your lifestyle, like avoiding high calorie beverages and upping your fruits and veggies, can make a difference.

Resolve to be Specific. Everyone is, in fact different, but we know that extra calories will cause anyone to gain weight. Therefore, finding a way to reduce your calorie intake should be specific to your habits and taste preferences. Replacing high calorie drinks with water, cutting restaurant portions in half, and avoiding sides like fries or chips are specific and can help if these are part of your everyday routine, but they might apply to everyone. In that case, take a good and honest look at your food habits and make some substitutions or reductions. If skipping fries is a non-starter then you can reduce the portion size or plan to balance them out throughout the day.

Be Patient...This isn't quick and can be a long effort. Half a pound of weight loss a week is fantastic progress, but especially appropriate for those that are small in stature or older. Half a pound a week might not seem like a lot, but that amounts to 2 pounds of weight loss each month. In 5 months, that will turn into 10 pounds of body weight loss. Think about that. If someone had told told at the beginning of August that you could lose 10 pounds by the beginning of the year, you would be thrilled.

That slow, realistic, and consistent change is the reason that "Step Up Scale Down" lasts 12 weeks. "Step Up Scale Down" is a New Year Weight Loss Program provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. It covers the basics of a balanced and portioned plan of eating that encourages fruits and vegetables and personal physical activity goals. The program also provides encouragement and accountability in a group setting for the community or worksites. Also available is an on-line version starting at the beginning of the year to use at your own pace; visit <https://stepupscaledown.org/> for more information. If you would be interested in participating in a Step Up Scale Down class in Parker County, contact the Parker County Extension Office at 817-598-6168.