

COMPLETELY WELL

January 2017

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Insurance Agency

New Year, New You



The New Year can be a great time to take a new approach, “reset” your focus to more healthy behaviors and greater happiness. Unfortunately, New Year’s resolutions can become overwhelming quickly, and, too often, the well-meaning list we made is in the garbage before Valentine’s Day. Maybe the problem is that we forget that the New Year is just a series of new days. We have a choice to begin again on each new day, in each new

minute. If we could approach our resolutions the same way that the year unfolds, one day at a time, we might find that the changes we want will be reality before the next New Year arrives.

Taking it one day at a time encourages us to take things one step at a time and live with intention. In a world where we multi-task ourselves into barely completing any task, one step at a time may seem impossible. Research shows us that we don’t learn new things well when we are distracted, and we have trouble remembering what we’ve learned. Trying to focus on the moment in whatever you are doing will actually make you more efficient and successful. Apply this to your resolutions for the year. What can you do today to move toward your goals? Make time today for your new goal and focus on it. For example, get up 10 minutes earlier and eat a healthy breakfast. Walk for 15 minutes at lunchtime. Drive home without the radio on for some quiet time. None of these are big changes. They ask that you make one choice at one time, focusing on what is important in the moment.

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Drug and Alcohol Facts

Alcohol is associated with celebrations, social outings, and romantic dinners, and society's take on drugs has changed with the legalization of marijuana in a number of states. But what are the health concerns about drugs and alcohol, aside from the serious case of addiction? Here is what you need to know:

Most research supports the claim that occasional moderate alcohol use is most likely safe for most adults. However, there are short term effects of alcohol consumption even at safe levels. According to the National Institute of Health, even 1 drink can cause changes in the brain, including a slowed reaction time and blurred vision. Those who exceed a moderate amount of alcohol may also experience memory loss, difficulty walking, and emotional changes. Excessive alcohol use is linked to increased risk of heart disease, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, fatty liver disease, cirrhosis, pancreatitis, and some cancers. Excessive alcohol also can weaken the body's immune system (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism).

The use of medical marijuana has proven to help those with certain diseases and conditions to feel better, experience less pain and nausea, and improve their appetite. For those who use marijuana recreationally, marijuana is associated with reduced memory, slowed reaction time, and an increased heart rate (*Psychology Today*). According to Minnesota State University, marijuana use is also linked to an increased risk of heart and lung damage, depression, and paranoia. Long term marijuana use is currently being studied, but there are already concerns about a lasting impact on cognitive function.

Both marijuana and alcohol have been called a "gateway drug," one that leads to other more dangerous drugs. While it is clear that not everyone who has a drink or tries marijuana will become a serious addict, it is worth noting that addiction to alcohol is associated with addiction to marijuana, and those who are addicted to marijuana are said to be "three times more likely to be addicted to heroin" (DuPont, *New York Times* April 26, 2016). As a society, we need to be aware of the possible short and long term effects these substances may have and make the best decisions we can for our health.

Produce of the Month

Kiwi

Kiwi, the fuzzy fruit with the sweet green flesh, is native to China. Initially called Chinese Gooseberries, the name Kiwifruit was given in honor of the New Zealand bird Kiwi because of the bird's small size and brown color. High in vitamins C and K, the kiwifruit is a good source of fiber and is considered an anti-inflammatory, making it heart healthy!

The Basics: When buying kiwifruit, choose a fruit that is firm, not hard, and doesn't have any obvious bruises or soft spots. Kiwifruit can be ripened the same way that peaches and nectarines are ripened: leave on the counter for a couple of days. Ripe kiwi may last longer in the refrigerator. When ready to eat, you can peel them with a small knife or you can scoop out the kiwifruit if you prefer.

Try This: Add kiwifruit to yogurt for a quick morning snack. Sliced kiwi tastes great with ham, poultry, or fish. Sliced kiwi can also be added to salads or as a side to any egg dish.

The facts: An average kiwifruit has about 45 calories and under 1 gram of fat. They are low in sugar (6 grams), making them a good fruit choice for diabetics.

The Dangers of Sitting

Health risks seem to be everywhere: fast food, tobacco, stress, and distracted driving. But did you know that sitting can be a health risk? A study out of London reported that those who sat for extended periods of time were at a significantly increased risk of premature death. Recent studies seem to temper those findings, but all research points to the dangers of being sedentary. Sitting for extended periods may not be quite as dangerous as first reported, but sitting and a general lack of movement is a serious health risk.

Regular movement during the day can help reduce the risks associated with a desk job. Walking whenever possible and standing up regularly seems to help. Research out of the federal National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that “small changes can have a big impact” (NPR). The American Society of Nephrology reported on a study published in the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*: those who moved for 2 minutes every hour of sitting decreased their risk of death by 33%. If your job requires you to be sedentary for long periods of time, set a timer so you can get up and move continuously for 2 minutes every hour. In addition, exercising moderately 5 days a week is recommended.

A sedentary lifestyle is one of the risk factors for premature death, along with tobacco use and a poor diet. A couple of minutes every hour can help reduce the risk.



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Approaching the year day by day puts more focus on the journey you are beginning rather than the outcome. Why is this important? Focusing on the journey puts the emphasis on the everyday activities and choices that make change possible. These then become part of our lives, habits we can continue. And with each day of healthier choices, our health improves. If you are exercising more to lose weight, don't focus so much on the scale that you overlook how much better you feel after working out. Be open to all of the benefits that your journey can bring you - those you expect and those that are surprises!

New Year's resolutions are a great way to point your life in a direction. But don't put all of the pressure on the outcome. Take it one day at a time, staying focused on the moment, and enjoy the process. You may find that your goals shift throughout the year, and that's okay, too. And knowing that it is all about putting one foot in front of the other each day can make it all possible.

What's For Breakfast?

We've all been told that breakfast is important. Now there is research that helps to explain the many reasons that breakfast may be the most important meal of the day.

- A study published in the journal *Circulation* reported that men had a 27% higher risk of heart attack and heart disease if they regularly skipped breakfast.
- Another study out of Japan found a link between eating breakfast and a lower risk of stroke.
- Many studies, including one out of London, found a correlation between breakfast eating and lower rates of obesity.
- The University of Missouri reported that type 2 diabetics had fewer blood sugar spikes during the day when they ate a protein-rich breakfast.

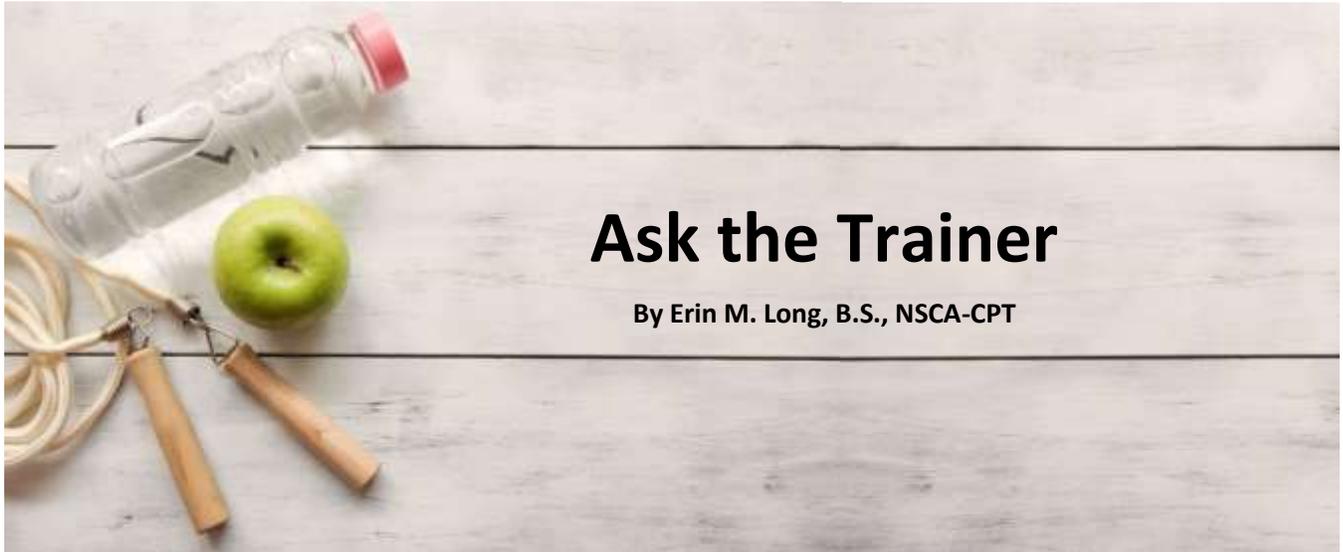


Here is what you need for a healthy and delicious breakfast:

1. Complex carbohydrate (For example, oatmeal, whole grains, spinach, sweet potato, lentils, beans, and any vegetable)
2. Healthy protein (For example, eggs or egg whites, chicken, turkey, fish, or organic dairy for those who eat animal products; for those who prefer whole based plant foods, protein is found in beans, legumes, nuts, soy and most vegetables)
3. Healthy fat (omega 3, monounsaturated and plant based saturated fats, such as avocado, olive oil, coconut oil, flaxseed, almonds, and walnuts)

Need a quick meal idea? Try one of these: oatmeal with walnuts and blueberries, whole grain toast with sliced avocado and hardboiled egg, or a sweet potato with scrambled egg white and spinach. Enjoy a delicious breakfast and start your day the healthy way!





Ask the Trainer

By Erin M. Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

Q: Happy New Year Erin! My question for you is how do I stay motivated throughout the year to get and stay in shape and not just for the New Year? It seems every year I make a goal to lose the same 20 pounds and I start off strong but then about 6 weeks later my motivation drops and that goal seems to go away. Any help would be appreciated. Thank you in advance. -Lydia, 41

A: Happy New Year to you Lydia and thank you for your question! I have been in this industry a while and what happens to you is very common this time of year. Everyone comes off the holidays ready to make changes, get in shape and lose weight but then after a few weeks that motivation slowly goes away and well you know the rest. Don't lose hope. There are plenty of ways to make sure this does not happen again.

First off, let's begin by making a goal to lose 20lbs this year. Be sure to write down this goal. Whether it is for fitness, health or even personal, write them down and put them in places you look daily. Make sure this is something you really want to accomplish, not just something that sounds good. Now let's take it another step, while the goal to lose 20lbs is great, let's make it a little more specific. For instance, "I am going to lose 20lbs by June 1st, 2017" or some people say to write a goal as if you have already achieved it "I lost 20lbs before June 1st, 2017."

Next, how are you going to achieve that goal? It's great to have the goal and have it written down but how are you going to accomplish it? Make a plan. For example, some of the things I would potentially do would be the following to work on this goal...

- I will plan my meals every Saturday, go grocery shopping on Sunday and prep that day.
- I will eat 1600 calories daily and these calories will consist of 30% protein, 30% Fat and 40% carbohydrates.
- I will drink over 100 ounces of water daily
- I will commit to working out 5 days a week. Two of these days will be strictly cardio, two days strength and one day of yoga.

This is just an idea for a plan of action to achieving the goal of losing 20lbs. If this seems overwhelming start, tackle one at a time starting with the weekly meal planning and work your way down the list.

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Another recommendation would be to tell a friend or two your goals and your steps to getting there. Sharing this with someone can help hold you accountable which can help you stay motivated.

Be sure to take a set of before pictures at the beginning of the year and take them monthly from there on out. Sometimes it's hard for us to see our body changing in the mirror or the scale just isn't moving fast enough. Having those pictures can help you see the changes and realize what you are doing is working and to keep going.

Positive affirmations! Find sayings or quotes that motive and inspire you and place them in the bathroom, in your car or at your desk at work. Doing this ahead of time can help keep you on track when you're having a bad day.

I am confident that this is your year to get and keep those 20lbs off! After you have achieved this goal, the next step would be to make another. Maybe it would be to run a 5K or half marathon, ok great. What are you going to do to get there? Staying motivated is an ongoing process. Once one goal is achieved, it is time to set another.

I hope this helps you as we head into this New Year! Please reach out to me with any other questions! Good Luck and Happy New Year Lydia!!!

-Erin Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

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