

Words of Wellness

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Happy New Year!

The New Year is a time to reflect on what has been and what the future may bring. We reminisce, make plans, and start fresh with our New Year's Resolutions. We hope during 2019 we can continue to provide you useful information and resources to enhance your wellness and for you to use to support others in becoming their best selves.



Not every culture or tradition celebrates the New Year on January 1. We love holidays, so add these additional New Year's Days¹ to your 2019 calendar:

January 14: Orthodox New Year (Russia)

February 5: Lunar New Year

March 7: Nyepi, Day of Silence (Bali)

March 21: Nowruz (Iran)

April 6: Ugadhi (Southern India)

April 14: Aluth Avurudda (Sri Lanka)

April 14: Puthandu (Tamil Nadu, India)

September 1: Awal Muharram (Islam)

September 30: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)

October 27: Diwali (Hindu)

Create your own calendar for this year! We heard from some readers about some calendars with some daily suggestions that we think can boost wellness.

The Happiness Calendar

The Greater Good Science Center produced a monthly calendar in 2018, starting with January.



https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC_Happy_January_2018.pdf

The Greater Good Science Center, along with Hope Lab (San Francisco), also launched the *Greater Good in Action* website that compiles research-based methods for a happier, more meaningful life.



<https://ggia.berkeley.edu>

The Kindness Calendar

Many versions of kindness calendars are available online, some for sale and some for free. Here are 2019 kindness calendars and posters that you can print.



<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>
(get inspired → free posters & calendars)

National Health Observances

Download toolkits related to raising awareness about important health and wellness topics each month.



<https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/default.aspx>

New Year Wellness Goals

At this time of year, we are inspired by the quote, “Begin as you mean to go on, and go on as you began.”ⁱⁱⁱ With that in mind, we share ways to use New Year’s Day to your advantage in setting wellness goals and achieving success.

- People are more likely to commit to goals on “fresh start days”—the beginning of the year or the month, or even on Mondays of holidays.ⁱⁱⁱ However, committing to a goal is not the same as achieving it!
- To some degree, the goal itself influences the likelihood of success. Goals that are both specific and challenging result in increased commitment and greater success.^{iv} Make sure your goal feels do-able to you, so you feel confident that you can achieve it.^v Getting peer support and sharing what you want to accomplish often if helpful.
- A goal that involves doing something (like eating more vegetables) is likely to be more effective

that choosing a goal that involves *not* doing something (like not eating cookies).^{vi}

- Accomplishing a goal or desired wellness vision requires action, not just a goal.^{vi}
- If you can set up a plan to take immediate action at your fresh start day, that will help.^{vii} Anticipate obstacles to success and build in ways to overcome or avoid them.^{viii}
- Once you start towards your goal, track your progress.^v
- Share your goals and plans with others. We would love to hear about your wellness goals during the year ahead.



References and Resources

Illustrations used in this issue are listed online as free for reuse without attribution, and are from various sources, including Microsoft Word® icons and pixabay.com.

ⁱ Look for more information on each of these New Year’s Days! We welcome hearing from our readers about their cultural traditions and celebrations for future issues of WoW.

ⁱⁱ The quote is from Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dai, H., Milkman, K. L., & Riis, J. (2014). The fresh start effect: Temporal landmarks motivate aspirational behavior. *Management Science*, 10(60):2563–2582. See also Hennecke, M., & Converse, B. A. (2017). Next week, next month, next year: How perceived temporal boundaries affect initiation expectations. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 8(8), 918-926.

^{iv} Epton, T., Currie, S., & Armitage, C. J. (2017). Unique effects of setting goals on behavior change: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical and Consulting Psychology*, 85(12), 1182-1198.

^v Norcross, J. C. (2012). *Changeology: 5 steps to realizing your goals and resolutions*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperback.

^{vi} Mann, T., de Ridder, D., & Fujita, K. (2013). Self-regulation of health behavior: Social psychological approaches to goal setting and goal striving. *Healthy Psychology*, 32(5), 487-498.

^{vii} Converse, B. A., & Hennecke, M. (2016, Dec 29). Why we think we can keep those New Year’s resolutions. *Scientific American Mind* (Guest Blog). <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/mind-guest-blog/why-we-think-we-can-keep-those-new-years-resolutions/>

^{viii} Gollwitzer, P. M., Fujita, K., & Oettingen, G. (2004). Planning and the implementation of goals. In R. F. Baumeister & K. D. Vohs (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory, and applications* (pp. 211-228). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.