

## **Resolve to successfully achieve your New Year's resolutions!**

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I will lose 15 pounds this year. I will spend more time with my grandkids. I will spend less money and save more. Chances are, you've made these or similar annual resolutions many times before. But if your resolutions are wishes instead of goals, you're much less likely to achieve them. What's the difference? "A goal without a plan is just a wish," was Antoine de Saint Exupéry's answer. Whether this year's resolutions are health- or wealth-related, or something completely different, the means to successfully achieving your goals are the same. Read below for hints from UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service on how to set yourself up for success to achieve this year's resolutions.

**Create a S.M.A.R.T plan.** S.M.A.R.T stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**daptable, **R**ealistic and **T**imed. This type of plan helps you visualize the path to your desired outcome, gives direction, helps measure progress and keeps you on-course.

**Specific:** What's your goal statement? What do you want to do, attain or achieve? Take your time; it's important to identify what goals are really important enough to work toward. Be specific. The more precisely you state your goal, the better your chance of achieving it. Include descriptions, dates, costs and other resources needed to accomplish the goal in this part of your plan.

**Measurable:** Keeping track of progress boosts confidence and shows you where or when to make adjustments. Will your progress be measured in pounds, hours or dollars? How and how often will you track your progress? Will you keep a journal or enter updates on the calendar?

**Adaptable:** Take some time to consider the road blocks you may encounter. Write down what actions you'll need to take if you're temporarily derailed. What alternative courses of actions can you take if circumstances change? Having a "Plan B" can be the difference between making a minor adjustment and declaring defeat.

**Realistic:** Is your goal realistic or is it wishful thinking? Will you be able to meet the goal within the set boundaries? Setting unrealistic goals can make you feel less confident about a successful outcome.

**Timed:** Set a date! Be reasonable. Be realistic. Should you reduce an amount or reset your deadline? Remember, attaining small goals gives us the confidence to tackle the big ones. Take small steps.

**Write it down.** Your plan is not a plan until you put it on paper. Constructing a safe building requires a blueprint. Navigating to unknown destinations requires a map. A S.M.A.R.T goal plan is no different. Write it down.

### **Learn More**

Want an expert to give a class to your group at no cost? Want to learn more through Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ or other programs? Contact Lynda Spence, an Extension Agent at UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service at 352-671-8400 or [lynda.spence@marioncountyfl.org](mailto:lynda.spence@marioncountyfl.org), or visit [www.marioncountyfl.org/extensionservice.htm](http://www.marioncountyfl.org/extensionservice.htm).