

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Michiel Rorick

## Healthy Resolutions

*It takes an average of three weeks for new behaviors to become habits. That's why Dr. Rorick encourages patients to focus on making — and keeping — healthy New Year's resolutions now.*



Research shows that those who make resolutions to alter their behavior report higher rates of success than those who thumb their nose at this timeless tradition.

In one study, 159 volunteers who made resolutions were compared with 123 who didn't. Six months after the study began, 46 percent of those committed to making resolutions were still keeping them. This compares to only four percent of those who didn't take resolutions seriously (*J Clin Psychol* 2002;58:397-405).

Want to increase the odds that you'll keep your New Year's resolutions? Tell friends and family! Research shows that social pressure from telling others about your resolutions increases the likelihood that they'll become permanent practices.

"If we tell people we're going to do something and don't do it, we believe something bad will happen to us," says the study's author. "We're very social creatures and social consequences are important to us." (*Psychol Today* 1985;19:11.)

To help get you going, Dr. Rorick has outlined some sure-fire resolutions designed to get your 2007 off on the right foot — and keep it there! Choose one or two to focus on.

### Commit to Chiropractic

Regularly scheduled chiropractic care is the foundation of the **chiropractic lifestyle**, a philosophy that focuses on preventing illness and disease.

That's why it's so important to put chiropractic care at the top of your resolutions list. When spinal bones (vertebrae) become misaligned, the result is a common condition known as **vertebral subluxation**. Low-back pain, migraine headaches and carpal tunnel syndrome are just three of the many physical repercussions linked to vertebral subluxation.

Dr. Rorick reverses vertebral subluxations and realigns vertebrae with safe and gentle maneuvers known as **chiropractic adjustments**.

### Make a Point to Move

In addition to chiropractic adjustments, Dr. Rorick often prescribes exercises designed to strengthen muscles adjacent to the spine: reducing stress and strain.

Strengthening trunk and pelvic muscles, for instance, helps mediate low-back pain when done in conjunction with chiropractic care (*J Manipul Physiol Therap* 2002;25:497-503).

Dancing is a great way to get moving

and launch your new year! "The physical benefits of dance therapy as exercise are well documented," according to researchers in Turkey. "Studies have shown that physical activity is known to increase special neurotransmitter substances in the brain (endorphins), which create a state of well-being. And total body movement such as dance enhances the functions of other body systems, such as circulatory, respiratory, skeletal, and muscular systems." (*Asian Pac J Cancer Prev* 2005;6:408-11.)

The researchers note that dance or movement therapy is also helpful for those who have experienced amputations, traumatic brain injury, stroke, chronic illnesses, Alzheimer's disease, cystic fibrosis, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, AIDS and arthritis.

### Snack Smart

Instead of resolving to cease snacking altogether, Dr. Rorick suggests a more practical and realistic approach: choose a few smart food substitutes. For instance, resolve to swap potato chips for thin, diagonally cut "carrot chips." Instead of a candy bar, reach for a shiny, juicy apple. Or, opt for a handful of roasted nuts instead of a cookie.



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## Tune Out Television

Turning off the tube can help you lose weight, be happier and bond with family.

A German study has also linked television to an increased risk of language impairment among preschool children.

Researchers tested 3,234 children — the majority of whom had televisions in their bedrooms — for correct use of plural, comparative and superlative forms, syntax, verb flexion and use of articles. A maximum of five mistakes could be made.

Results showed the prevalence for language impairment (more than one mistake) was 95 percent. Researchers concluded that television in children's bedrooms "appears to be an important, independent risk factor for expressive language impairment in preschool children." (*Gesundheitswesen* 2006;68:613-7.)

And, never eat in front of the television, as it encourages snacking. This is especially crucial for youngsters. Television may also lead to "skipped" meals. The bottom line: fewer wholesome sources of calories.

In a study of 2,546 youths between the ages of 13 and 16, one respondent out of ten reported skipping at least one meal every week due to television viewing or playing a computer game. This pattern occurred most often with boys: particularly those who viewed five or more hours of television per week (*J Hum Nutr Diet* 2006;19:91).

TV also exposes kids to junk food commercials. An Australian study published last month focused on snack promotions directed specifically at children. The use of television, movie celebrities and cartoon characters made up 75 percent of all promotions.

"Data from this study also confirmed that 82 percent of all food promotions were for unhealthy foods and only 18 percent were used to promote healthy foods." (*Health Promot Int* 2006;21:331-9.)

## Snub Smoking

Smoking is linked with various forms of cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, dementia, depression, chronic pain, and a slue of other ailments.

The same is true for smoking "light" cigarettes. Touted as being "better" than regular cigarettes because they contain less nicotine, light cigarettes may actually *deter* smoking cessation, according to research.

An analysis of 32,374 responses to the US National Health Interview Survey led researchers at the University of Pittsburgh to conclude that "use of light cigarettes was common and was associated with lower odds of current smoking cessation, validating the concern that smokers may use 'lights' as an alternative to cessation." (*Am J Public Health* 2006;96:1498-504.)

## Sleep Soundly

Sleep is vital to a solid immune system, optimal brain function and physical performance. Studies also reveal that skimping on sleep leads to weight gain.

Research shows that sleep is crucial to maintaining memory. "Those who do not sleep enough each night are apt to forget learned facts." (*Am Fam Phys* 2006;74.5:707.)

Seven to eight hours of uninterrupted sleep is the gold standard. More than eight hours, however, also has its drawbacks.

Women who sleep for nine hours or longer have a 38 percent higher risk of having a coronary event compared with those who sleep eight hours (*Arch Int Med* 2003;163:205-09).

In a US study of 71,617 female health professionals, investigators found that "both short and long durations of sleep were independently associated with a small increased risk of coronary events."

## More Healthy Resolutions

You may also want to consider the following health-boosting resolutions:

- ✓ Stop stressing. Stress is linked to a number of diseases. It can also sap mental and physical energy.
- ✓ Limit e-mail and texting time. Instead, resolve to schedule more one-on-one time with friends and family. Studies show that social isolation negatively impacts health.
- ✓ Monitor alcohol intake. While moderate wine consumption provides a rich source of antioxidants and may lower blood glucose levels in Type II diabetics, alcohol can destroy lives and livers.
- ✓ Learn something new. Research shows that active brains are less likely to develop dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- ✓ Brush and floss your teeth. Not only will it give you a brighter smile and prevent dental decay, but regular dental hygiene also reduces the likelihood of heart disease.
- ✓ Buckle your seat belt. And while you are at it, make sure everyone else in your car buckles theirs as well.

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