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## Smart Start on a New Year: Resolutions That Really Work

Ah January! It's that wonderfully hopeful time of year when we resolve to do better - to get in shape, to lose weight, and to ditch all the other bad habits we have been accumulating for decades. If you're like many folks, you may be looking at the exact same list of resolutions that you had last year.

"There are some key differences between the people who succeed with their New Year's resolutions and those who fail," says Kim Pullman, RD (registered dietitian), of Helena and the new Chairperson of the Eat Right Montana Coalition. "Just like in the race between the tortoise and the hare, people who succeed over the long term are more likely to take small steps and make steady progress. Extreme diet and exercise makeovers may seem like great ideas, but they rarely last long enough."

The effectiveness of taking small steps toward healthier lifestyles has been proven in scientific studies and is endorsed by US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Tools and information for implementing small steps are available on the HHS websites for adults ([www.smallstep.gov/](http://www.smallstep.gov/)) and kids (<http://smallstep.gov/kids/flash/index.html>). The same concepts provide the foundation for MSU Extension's *Small Steps to Health and Wealth* program being offered throughout the state.

As the wellness coordinator for the State of Montana Employee Health Care Plan, Pullman knows a lot about other factors that make resolutions work. "People are more successful with lifestyle changes when they track their progress and when they have support from family, friends, and coworkers." Here are some of her smart tips on getting a healthy start for a new decade in 2010:

- **Resolve to be realistic:** Ignore the ads for drastic diet programs, expensive exercise machines, and miraculous weight loss pills. Choose one or two small changes that you can stick with for the rest of your life. These can be as simple as eating breakfast every day or taking a 15-minute walk at lunch.
- **Resolve to put fun into fitness:** One of the top reasons that people stop exercising is that they don't enjoy it. Take some fun small steps toward fitness with a dance DVD or class. Use the buddy system for your 2010 fitness routine. It's more fun to do things with the support of a friend.
- **Resolve to put taste into nutrition:** A delicious, nutrient-rich eating style is just what RDs order for 2010. The best way to fill Americans' nutrient gaps is to eat more of the tasty foods that give you plenty of nutrition for your calories, like whole grains, veggies, fruit, low-fat dairy, and lean proteins.
- **Resolve to enjoy some new recipes:** "In 2010, Eat Right Montana is focusing on back-to-basics tips and information, including simple cooking skills and easy recipes for family health," notes Pullman. The January recipe, **Terry's Terrific Tortilla Soup**, is perfect for a family dinner or a potluck at work.

"*Shape Up Montana* ([www.shapeupmontana.org/](http://www.shapeupmontana.org/)) is another great program for teams and families," says Pullman. "It focuses on small, sustainable changes and lets you track your progress online."

Past and current issues of Eat Right Montana's monthly packets can be downloaded for free at [www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm](http://www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm)