

10 things you can do to make your 2015 healthier

Many of us make New Year's resolutions, though few of us actually keep them. But the new year still offers an excellent opportunity for a fresh start. The key to making good on resolutions is finding something that truly motivates you and then staying with it. Here are some worthwhile, achievable resolution ideas for 2015 and beyond:

- 1. Lose weight – Although this is probably the most common resolution, it may also be the most difficult commitment.** Old habits are hard to break. So, start small, take your time and be kind to yourself. You're not looking for a quick cure, but rather for a change in lifestyle.
- 2. Stay in touch – The pace of our lives may get in the way of staying connected to friends and family.** Research suggests that people with strong social ties live longer than those who don't have them. Use technology to reconnect and then follow up with in-person visits.
- 3. Quit smoking – It's one of the hardest habits to break, but so worth it.** Don't worry if you've failed before, as multiple attempts are often the path to success. You know the health benefits of quitting, but also think about the money you'll save when you quit.
- 4. Save money – Look at ways to cut costs this year.** Carpool or bike to work. Plan meals each week; make grocery lists based on meal plans and stick to the lists when shopping. Track spending and then look to see where cuts can be made. You may be surprised.
- 5. Cut your stress – Stress is a part of life, but when it becomes chronic, it can increase the risk of insomnia, depression, obesity, heart disease and more.** Evaluate what the sources of your stress are and take an honest look at what may need to be done to release some of the pressure.
- 6. Volunteer – Instead of focusing on what you can do for yourself, think about what you can do for others.** There's a tremendous need for help in schools, neighborhoods, shelters and more. Find an organization that interests you and offer your time. The positive emotions you feel will help you become more resilient and resourceful.
- 7. Go back to school – No matter your age, returning to the classroom will introduce you to new ideas, friends and opportunities.** Actively engaging your brain will help improve verbal skills and creativity and may even decrease the risk of Alzheimer's disease.
- 8. Cut back on alcohol – Drinking alcohol in excess affects the brain's neurotransmitters and can increase the risk of depression, memory loss, liver and heart disease, hypertension, stroke and even cancers of the mouth, throat, liver and breast.**
- 9. Get more sleep – A lack of sleep can affect mood and appearance, and has been linked to a greater risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes.** When alert, you work more safely and can be more productive.
- 10. Travel – Taking a trip gets us away from the familiar and routine.** We gain a broader perspective of our world and energize our senses. Plan some of your own adventures in 2015.





- Know the heart attack warning signs
- Prepare for pets before emergencies

February is American Heart Month

Heart attack: The subtle, stealth killer of women

A heart attack strikes someone about every 34 seconds. It occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart muscle is severely reduced or cut off completely. This happens when the arteries that supply the heart with blood slowly narrow from a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances like plaque. Even though heart disease is the number one killer of women, many are not aware that the signs of a heart attack are often more subtle for women.



As with men, women can experience chest pain, but they should also be aware of the less obvious symptoms like nausea, indigestion and palpitations in addition to shortness of breath and back pain. In one study, nearly half of the women surveyed had no chest pain at all during their heart attacks. *Fatigue and shortness of breath were the most common symptoms.*

Remember these heart attack signs:

1. **Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of the chest.** It lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back.
2. **Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, or in the back, neck, jaw or stomach.**
3. **Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.**
4. **Sudden cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.**

Being caretakers, women often put their families first and dismiss the warning signs as discomfort from their busy lives. They may think that what they're experiencing is acid reflux, the flu or normal aging, and most are shocked when they learn it's actually a heart attack. Because the symptoms are subtle, the consequences can be deadly, especially if victims don't get help right away.

If you notice symptoms that are new, increasing in frequency, getting worse, or occurring when you are at rest, seek medical attention immediately.

Source: American Heart Association

Emergency Preparedness Part 3

Have a plan in place for your animals should disaster strike

If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household. And, like people, animals are affected by disaster.

The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire or flood, tornado or terrorist attack will depend largely on the emergency planning you do today. Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected—assembling an animal emergency supply kit and developing a pet care buddy system, for example—are the same checklist items recommended for any emergency. Whether you decide to stay put in a crisis or evacuate to a safer location, you'll need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

For example, if you evacuate your home, don't leave your pets behind! Pets most likely will not be able to survive on their own and, if by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.



If you're going to a public shelter, it's important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets. Look to loved ones or friends outside your immediate area who'd be willing to host you and your pets in an emergency.

Make a back-up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you're unable to do so. Be prepared to improvise and use what's available to help you and your pets survive for at least three days, maybe longer.

Use the Humane Society of the United States' Pet Owners Brochure and the Pet Instructional Video to help you create an emergency plan and kit for your pet.

For additional information, please contact the Humane Society of the United States at www.hsus.org.

Source: <http://www.ready.gov/prepared2014>

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- Be aware of ladder hazards
- Quote to Note



Ladders are deceptively simple devices with hidden hazards

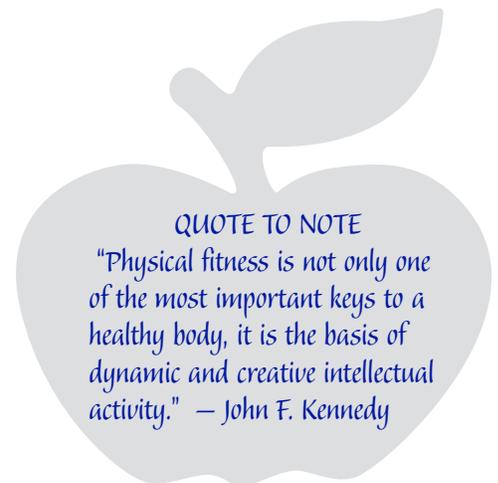
Ladders are pretty uncomplicated devices. Unfortunately, they cause more than their share of accidents because of improper selection or use. Following are some guidelines for buying, using, maintaining and storing ladders:

General concerns with ladders

- **Poor condition** – If a ladder is missing parts or has parts that are not intact, it's not going to support a person safely. Replace it. Frequent ladder inspections are key.
- **Improper selection** – Not every ladder is right for every use. Always be aware of a ladder's weight and height limits. Never use a metal ladder near live electrical wires, as metal conducts electricity.
- **Improper use** – Ladders are designed to get you to higher levels—they were not designed to be platforms, scaffolds, skids or braces.
- **Lack of use** – When you have to climb, use a ladder—the right ladder—and not a chair, desk, box or other substitute.

Pointers for using ladders safely

- Select a ladder that's the right length and has the correct weight capacity for the job.
- Make sure the rungs/steps are in good condition, have non-slip surfaces, and are free of grease and oil.
- Set up ladders on firm level surfaces only.
- Don't allow more than one person on a ladder.
- Wear shoes with clean nonskid soles.
- Face the ladder when climbing up or down.
- Don't try to move a ladder while on it.
- Use both hands to climb.
- Set ladder feet parallel to the surface it rests against.
- Check that support braces, bolts, screws and other components are in good condition.
- Keep one hand on the ladder while working.
- Store ladders either vertically or horizontally with supports at each end and in the middle.
- Get assistance when moving a heavy or awkward object up or down a ladder.
- When a ladder would help get a job done, take the extra time to go get it!



QUOTE TO NOTE

"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity." — John F. Kennedy

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- Take safety along when on the road
- WeTip works well in winter

Take safety along when you take to the road

When the weather is cold and icy or wet and sloppy, it's a good idea to pack some reliable safety precautions for the trip. Below are some tried-and-true tips to keep in mind:



- **Give yourself enough time to arrive at your destination.** Trips can take longer during winter than at other times of the year, especially in storm conditions when the roads are wet or icy.
- **Make sure your cell phone is charged in the event you are stuck along the road,** but always avoid the temptation to use the phone while driving.
- **Adjust your speed to the road's conditions.**
- **Leave more distance than usual between your vehicle and the one just ahead of you,** giving yourself at least 10 seconds to come to a complete stop.
- **Be careful when driving over bridges and roadways rarely exposed to sunlight** – they're often icy when other areas are not.
- **Do not activate your cruise control when driving on a slippery surface.**
- **Monitor weather conditions at your destination before beginning your trip.** If conditions look as though they're going to be too hazardous, just stay home.
- **Look out for yourself.** Assume other drivers are not concerned with your safety – you are responsible for protecting yourself and your passengers.

WeTip when it's winter

Remember to take advantage of the free WeTip materials. The darker nights of the winter offer opportunities for campus theft. Remind visitors that the site is being watched and that crime information can be anonymously reported. For promotional materials, contact your district WeTip liaison or Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org.



The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).

Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder and be sure all employees receive a copy.