New Year, New Thoughts — Are You Ready for Change?

Submitted by: David Swihart, Coordinator, Employee Assistance, UA Life & Work Connections

Happy New Year!

As the popular saying goes, “Out with the old, in with the new.” Traditionally, the new year is a time to clear the slate and start over in some form or fashion. New Year’s resolutions typically involve changing lifestyle habits: to get more exercise, or eat better (or do both) in order to lose weight. Other common resolutions involve the way we relate to other people: “I’m going to be nicer to my spouse,” or “I’m going to listen to people and count to 3 before I respond.”

It’s hard to make the changes stick, isn’t it? By February or March many of us have dropped or forgotten about our resolutions. This in turn can add yet another layer of guilt to the emotional onion we carry around inside us. Like real onions, an emotional onion’s odor tends to permeate through our lives, tainting our thoughts and feelings, and occasionally making our eyes tear up so that we can’t see ourselves or the world clearly.

Over the years I have been asked numerous times, “Can a person really change?” My answer is absolutely, positively yes. Then why doesn’t change happen more often? Because it’s hard! Or, perhaps because we don’t know quite how to do it on a regular basis; or maybe deep down we really don’t want to change — at least not enough to sustain the hard work.

On that last thought, it can be useful to think about why we may not want to change. For example, consciously or unconsciously, one person may eat lots of sweets as a coping mechanism to soothe stress. If they want to cut back on sweets, they will have to come up with a new way to self-soothe during stressful situations; otherwise a resolution to cut out sweets is unlikely to stick.

One way to keep a resolution is to choose to look at it in a different way, to deliberately redefine what it means. For example, giving up sweets might conjure up visions of a starvation diet of dry carrots and pressed sawdust “rice” cakes. Not very motivating; so using your brainpower, creatively choose a new meaning and stay with it — in order to accomplish something you decide is important. So, maybe instead of “giving up sweets,” you decide that you are going to set an example of self-discipline for yourself and your children, and hopefully lose weight in the process. So when tempted, you execute your plan to be that example, and do something to redirect your mind like pop a piece of sugarless gum in your mouth. Shift the focus of your mind from sweets to accomplishing your purpose (not necessarily your goal). Later, give yourself credit for achieving your purpose for that moment. Let this thought build self-confidence. Of course, substitute your own actions and purposes into this example.

The reality is that we can think about something sad and make ourselves feel depressed. We can think about something wonderful and make ourselves feel joy. We can think about a biting into a fresh-cut lemon wedge and make ourselves salivate. Use more of that brain power and help yourself get to your goal.

Need help mapping something out? Not sure where to start? Life & Work Connections’ Employee Assistance Services can help. Assisting UA employees to accomplish their goals is what we do, and it’s what we’re here for. Free, confidential, and voluntary.

Go ahead and make one resolution: Losing weight. Quitting smoking. Taking charge of how you handle stress. Whatever it is, make it a strong focus of your attention. And let us know if we can help.
Exploring energy-bar options

Read the ingredient list — not just the nutrition facts panel. Do you know what the ingredients are (or even how to pronounce their names)? If not, you may want to move on to another option. Manufacturers may add extra fats, sugar alcohols, and other chemicals that make the bars taste good, but aren’t necessarily good for you.

Ask yourself why you are eating the bar. Is it a meal replacement or a healthy diet supplement that you have before or after a workout? As a meal replacement, look for a bar with at least 300 calories and 10 grams of protein. As a snack or supplement, a bar should have 5 grams or less of protein.

Focus on fiber. A bar should have at least 2 to 3 grams of dietary fiber. Beware, though, that some bars use chicory root or artificial fibers that may lead to gas issues. Opt for bars with fiber from grains, fruits, vegetables, or nuts.

Freshening up frozen vegetables

Frozen vegetables sometimes get a bad rap for being bland or unappealing compared to fresh vegetables. However, frozen versions can be just as delicious — and they are just as nutritious.

- Select frozen vegetables that don’t have any additives, such as butter or sauces.
- Store frozen vegetables in your freezer for up to three months.
- Steam, bake, or sauté frozen vegetables, but don’t boil them, which can make them a mushy, watery mess and remove nutrients. You can also microwave vegetables, adding just enough water to fill the bottom of the dish.
- Add your favorite herbs and spices — such as freshly ground black pepper, garlic powder, chili powder, rosemary, basil, sage, or dill.
- If you’re adding the frozen vegetables to a casserole, stir-fry, soup, pasta, or other recipe, don’t cook the vegetables before adding them.

No-bake, Easy Energy Bars

- 1 cup peanut butter*  
  - 3 cups oatmeal (dry, uncooked)  
  - ½ cup honey  
  - 2 Tbsp. whey protein

Directions:
Combine peanut butter and honey in a large, nonstick pot and warm over low heat until runny and mixed thoroughly. Add and stir in oatmeal and protein powder. Heat long enough to mix completely. Press mixture into a 9x3-inch pan; let cool completely. Slice into 16 bars and package each in a small, plastic sandwich bag. Serves 16. Per serving: 195 calories, 9 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 75 mg sodium, 24 g carbohydrates, 6 g protein (nutritional information for base recipe, does not include optional add-ins). *Soy nut butter can be used in place of peanut butter for those who have a peanut allergy.

Source: Cleveland Clinic
Get Moving: Are you ready for CrossFit? CrossFit™ is an exercise craze that’s gaining strength in numbers.

This group fitness program features a variety of high-intensity exercises and explosive lifts designed to challenge an individual’s strength and endurance.

Many CrossFit® fans indicate they’ve experienced phenomenal results from their fitness routines, but others have suffered injury. To make sure your workouts are both safe and effective:

1. Take an introductory course to learn proper technique.
2. Talk with your coach about any limitations or past injuries that might interfere with your ability to perform certain exercises.
3. Modify exercises, if needed, to meet your specific goals and limitations. Only do movements you can do safely and in good form.
4. Rest and recover between sessions. Talk with your coach about your goals and how to gradually add days to your weekly workout routine.

Source: The American Council on Exercise

Mall walking: The excuse-proof exercise

Don’t use the weather as an excuse not to go for a walk. If you can’t go outside, head over to your local mall. You’ll never have to worry about rain, snow, wind, or temperature.

To get started with a mall-walking routine:
• Ask your doctor or healthcare provider if you are fit for walking.
• Invest in comfortable workout clothes and shoes. Because the walking surface is hard, you may want to wear shock-absorbing shoes to protect your joints.
• Start walking. Shoot for 10 to 15 minutes at a comfortable pace. After a few days, increase your pace and time.
• Be mindful of temptations to spend money. Walk without your wallet or bring just a minimum amount of cash.
• Keep motivated by bringing along a walk buddy.

A few mall-walking etiquette suggestions:
• Walk on the right; pass on the left.
• Do not walk three or more abreast.
• Keep moving at a steady pace. If you need to stop, move to the side first.
• Respect mall property.
• Avoid texting while you walk.

Source: Mercy Cedar Rapids

Mapping out your 2015 ‘Get Moving’ plan

Chances are there are runs, walks, and other organized physical-activity events happening around your local area just about every weekend throughout the year.

Take some time now to plan out your schedule for the next 12 months.

Here are some things to consider:
• What’s your budget for these events?
• How often do you want to participate in an organized event?
• By when do you need to register for events?
• How much training will you need?
• Do you want to participate in the event by yourself or with others you know?

To find events near you, go to Jan.HopeHealth.com

Many malls allow walkers in before stores open. Check with your local mall for walking hours.
Have you done a neck check lately?

Roughly 15 million Americans have undiagnosed thyroid problems. The thyroid is a small gland that makes hormones to help the functioning of many organs, including the heart, brain, liver, kidneys, and skin.

For early detection of a thyroid problem, perform a simple neck check self-exam monthly. You’ll need a handheld mirror and a glass of water.

1. Hold the mirror in your hand, focusing on the lower front area of your neck, above the collarbones and below the voice box.
2. While looking at this area in the mirror, tip your head back.
3. Drink and swallow some water.
4. As you swallow, look at your neck. Check for bulges or lumps when you swallow. Don’t confuse the Adam’s apple with the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland is located farther down, close to the collarbone. You may want to repeat this process several times.
5. If you see any bulges or lumps, contact your physician, who can investigate further.

For more information on how to do a neck check, search online using the term “thyroid neck check self-exam.”

Source: American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists

Handshake alternatives that germs don’t like

Greetings and goodbyes can be germ-transferring fests when handshakes are involved. Be polite and avoid potential problems by using other gestures.

- Fist bump: You and the other person form closed fists with one hand and then lightly tap your fists together — either knuckles to knuckles or one fist on top of the other.
- Use the Namaste greeting: Press your own hands together, palms touching and fingers pointing upward, thumbs close to the chest. Then, bow forward slightly.
- Give a thumbs up • Flash the peace sign • Smile and nod • Bow

Carry a small container of hand sanitizer, and use it after those times when nothing other than a handshake will do.
Creating your own ‘happy place’

After a long day, most people want and need to relax and recharge. Your environment can play a role in helping to provide that mental rest and reboot. Consider creating your own indoor oasis.

Some environmental considerations:

- **Light.** Think natural light from windows. Use light fabrics for curtains to allow the light to filter in while still giving you privacy.
- **Nature.** Consider incorporating living plants or a water feature, such as a fountain. Enhance the natural feel by using organic materials in your furnishings, pillows, and linens.
- **Space.** Designate a special spot as yours — whether it’s a comfortable chair and a nearby bookshelf, a lounging daybed, or a craft area. Create an area that helps you unwind.
- **Color.** Choose colors that calm you. You may want to consider colors such as light blues and soft browns.
- **Scent.** Try aromatherapy. Use a candle or diffused essential oil in a pleasing scent.

How to be more creative — even if you’re not the creative type

To be more creative, continually exercise your creative juices.

- **Keep a notebook and pencil handy.** You never know when an idea may come. Jot down ideas so you won’t forget them, and come back to them when you have time. Or, if you have time when writing down the ideas, engage in free-flow thought and journaling.
- **Be a question asker.** Constantly ask questions about the world around you. Many inventions have been created by initially asking the simple question, “What if…?”
- **Read.** Reading can improve your mental ability and give you new perspectives. Plus, the more you read, the more you may want to know about something.
- **Look for new experiences and develop new skills.** Whether it’s exploring a museum, learning a language, playing an instrument, or something else — exposing yourself to new places and activities can help you to think and work outside your regular patterns, expanding your creativity.

New, improved ways to say, ‘Great Job!’

Your intention is to convey how impressed you are or how much you appreciate the person’s efforts. But, let’s face it: “great” is greatly overdone. Next time you want to compliment someone, consider using a refreshing, more specific alternative such as:

- Amazing
- Astonishing
- Astounding
- Awesome
- Brilliant
- Clever
- Excellent
- Exceptional
- Extraordinary
- Fabulous
- Fantastic
- First-rate
- Flawless
- Four-star
- Impressive
- Incredible
- Magnificent
- Marvelous
- Masterful
- Outstanding
- Perfect
- Phenomenal
- Refreshing
- Remarkable
- Sensational
- Spectacular
- Stupendous
- Superb
- Terrific
- Top-notch
- Tremendous
- Unbelievable
- Unparalleled
- World-class
Fiscal Fitness: Before you ‘sign here’

Here are tips to keep in mind before you sign on the dotted line.

- Do an online search of the product/service/person/organization with the keyword “complaint.”
- Get a copy of the contract before you need to sign it so you can go over it without pressure or distractions.
- If you don’t understand words or clauses, call someone for help or search online for explanations.
- If you see something that looks vague, ask for exact terms. You can write in details and ask the other party to initial what is new or changed.
- Never sign a contract with blanks that haven’t been filled in.
- You can delete terms you disagree with and have the other party initial the change. Of course, the other party can refuse to agree. If so, reconsider whether you want to enter into the contract at all.

Once you’ve signed the contract, get a copy and keep it someplace safe should you ever need it.

Source: National Endowment for Financial Education

How to save your savings account from bottoming out

If you need to borrow money from your savings account, have a payback plan in place before you make the withdrawal so you can replenish the account should you need money in the future.

If you don’t think you can repay the money all at once and soon, create a payment schedule. Determine how much you can afford to deposit and when (weekly, biweekly, monthly, etc.). This will help you to determine how long you need to pay back the money, which may help you to decide if what you’re about to spend your money on is worth it.

The lowdown on grocery-store loyalty programs

Customer loyalty cards are becoming increasingly popular for both consumers and grocery stores.

Consumers want to save as much money as possible, and stores want people spending as much money as possible. As a result, there are pros and cons you need to think about.

Advantages

- Most programs are free and easy to use.
- Many stores send electronic coupons for items you buy regularly. You simply swipe your card at the checkout instead of using paper coupons.
- With many programs, you can rack up points to use toward future purchases.
- Many cards have member-only deals.

Disadvantages

- The store can track your purchases and tie them to personal information to create a consumer profile.
- You may buy higher-priced items or items you don’t need because they are on sale or you earn points.
- If a particular product is tied to a program deal, that product may be sold out before you can buy it, because other loyalty-program members may stock up.
For more information on the programs listed below, please call 621-2493 or visit our website at lifework.arizona.edu.

**ADOA Health Impact Program (HIP)**

Life & Work Connections (LWC) has partnered with ADOA Benefit Options Wellness to offer classes and wellness opportunities that fulfill the requirements of the Health Impact Program — [benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness](http://benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness). LWC health screenings, presentations, fitness classes, and nutrition and fitness consultations are some of the activities that fulfill the requirements as HIP activities. Consult the LWC website for details regarding enrollment, eligibility, qualifying activities, and incentives.

**Maricopa County Employee Wellness**

Life & Work Connections offers work/life and employee wellness programming every month at the Phoenix Biomedical Campus. Check [lifework.arizona.edu/wws/phoenixcampus](http://lifework.arizona.edu/wws/phoenixcampus) for the schedule. Contact Jodi Charvoz, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and ACE Personal Trainer, to schedule a nutrition or fitness consultation at jcharvoz@email.arizona.edu.

**Walk Across Arizona!**

Introductory meeting: January 21, 2015, noon to 1:00 p.m., Ventana Room, 4th floor of the Student Union

**Guest Speaker:** Scott Going, PhD, Department Head, Nutritional Sciences

Want to be part of a UA tradition and get some great exercise? Form a team for Walk Across Arizona! Whether you are in WAAZ for the competition, or simply as a motivation to increase your daily exercise, your body and mind will thank you for the exercise!

**Open Employee Health Screening Dates**

January 22, February 19, March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18

Registration required. Please register online at [lifework.arizona.edu/wws/health_screenings_worksite_wellness](http://lifework.arizona.edu/wws/health_screenings_worksite_wellness).

This program is for benefits-eligible employees. The screening includes blood pressure, total cholesterol and HDL, body composition, cardiac endurance step test, nutrition, fitness, and resilience consultation. If you are concerned about your risk for diabetes, you may also have the A1c diabetes screening for a $10 charge. This screening measures your long-term glucose levels (A1c). Neither blood test requires that you fast.

**Nutrition Presentation Series**

- **Tuesday, January 13, 10:00 to 10:30 a.m.** Kuiper Space Sciences Building, Room 309
- **Wednesday, January 14, noon to 12:30 p.m.** Kiewit Auditorium

**Presenter:** Christy Wilson, RDN

**Facts on Dietary Fats and Heart Disease Prevention**

**Tuesday, February 10, 10:00 to 10:30 a.m.** Kuiper Space Sciences Building

**Wednesday, February 11, noon to 12:30 p.m.** Kiewit Auditorium

**Presenter:** Nancy Rogers, MS, RDN

**Pre-Diabetes and Diabetes Management with Diet**

**Prostate Screening**

- **Tuesday, February 24, 7:00 a.m. to noon** Mobile Onsite Mammography (MOM)
- **Thursday, March 26, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Kiewit Auditorium

For more information please check: [lifework.arizona.edu/wws/health_screenings](http://lifework.arizona.edu/wws/health_screenings)

**Walks with Campus Leaders**

Check our website for scheduled noon time walks on campus with administrators, deans, and department heads. Come and support our top leaders as they set the example of getting some physical activity during the work day.

**Resistance Bands for Strength Classes**

**Mondays:** Kiewit Auditorium, noon to 12:40 p.m.

**Wednesdays:** Student Union, Tubac Room (4th floor), noon to 12:40 p.m.

University Services Building (USB), 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. (check website for day and location) [lifework.arizona.edu/wws/strength_training](http://lifework.arizona.edu/wws/strength_training).

**Creative Walking for Health Pathways**

Take a look at [lifework.arizona.edu/cwp/home](http://lifework.arizona.edu/cwp/home) and use it to guide a walking adventure on the UA main campus! Start with the general area on campus you’d like to visit (north, central, historic, or south campus). Under each location, you will find options to fit your mood: Parks and Quiet Places, Water Features, Architectural Landmarks and Sculptures, Views and Vistas, or Museums, Galleries, and Libraries. Discover the incredible wealth of walking destinations you can enjoy!

**Employee Wellness Facebook Page and Twitter**

For all the latest, “like” us at Employee Wellness — The University of Arizona or follow the link at [lifework.arizona.edu](http://lifework.arizona.edu).

**Smart Moves Food**

Many Student Union restaurants are serving foods that are good for you and good for the environment, designated by a Smart Moves icon next to it on the menu. Visit [smartmoves.arizona.edu](http://smartmoves.arizona.edu).

**Weight Check Dates**

Want to keep yourself accountable by a weight check, a quick chat with a registered dietitian nutritionist, and a helpful handout? Stop by the LWC office from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. or the Student Union, Copper Room (4th floor) from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. once a month January through June — no need to register. The January weight check will also be the final “Maintain No Gain 8 Week Holiday Challenge” weight check. Visit [lifework.arizona.edu/wws/available_classes/weightchallenges](http://lifework.arizona.edu/wws/available_classes/weightchallenges) for updates, times, and locations.

**Weight Watchers At Work® January 2015**

Interested in having a 10-week Weight Watchers at Work® group on campus? For information and to register, drop-in at a Weight Watchers Open House:

- **January 5, UAMC Cafeteria Dining Room A** 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **January 7, Student Union, Copper Room,** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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Really easy random acts of kindness
Making someone’s day can make your day, too. Doing nice things for others doesn’t have to be difficult or expensive. Here are a few ideas to try this month.

Jan 1 – 7: Give or leave out coupons for someone to use at the grocery store. You can simply put the coupons near the products.

Jan 8 – 14: Leave a thank-you note for your mailman or newspaper carrier. If you want, you could even include a small treat such as a piece of chocolate or mint.

Jan 15 – 21: Hold the door open for others at the store, work, etc.

Jan 22 – 31: Smile and make eye contact with at least 10 people you see.

January 8, Phoenix Biomedical Campus, Building 1, Main Floor, Front Foyer, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Cost of the 10-week series is $130 prepaid and includes all online resources and attendance at other meeting sites. Fifteen participants at each site are required to start a series.

Tai Chi for Health
Tai Chi is a mind/body activity known for its health benefits, including stress reduction, balance, and joint pain improvement. UA Life & Work Connections offers free Tai Chi for Health and Tai Chi for Energy classes. Registration is required. Check lifework.arizona.edu/wwa/classes/taichi for the current class schedule.

Healthy Recipes
Need inspiration for your next meal? Want to eat real food? Go to our website for delicious taste-tested recipes!

Guided Potlucks
Here’s a new way to liven up your departmental meetings! Choose a venue, you bring the food, and a Life & Work Connections Dietitian Nutritionist will highlight the health benefits of the foods you are eating. For details, please check LWC’s website.

Continuous Offerings
For more information on any programs, please call 621-2493. For program information for Maricopa County, please check lifework.arizona.edu/wwa/offcampus.

Individual Counseling/Consultation:
Free, voluntary, and confidential counseling. Issues include but are not limited to alcohol and drug abuse, marital or relationship difficulties, parenting issues, stress, anxiety, depression, and job/career difficulties.

Supervisor Consultation: Regarding individual and work group issues. Call for an appointment.

Child Care and Family Resources: For information on the Child Care Voucher and Sick Child and Emergency Back-Up Care Programs, please call 621-4365. For a personalized phone or in-person consultation, infant/toddler, preschool, or school-age care needs, please call 621-9870. Visit lifework.arizona.edu for forms, guidelines, and detailed information.

Elder Care and Life Cycle Resources:
This service provides a broad spectrum of programs and services to address elder care issues for employed caregivers. Individual consultations are available by calling 621-9870.

Nutrition/Fitness Coaching: Call Nancy Rogers, MS, RDN, at 621-4601, or Jodi Chavoz, MEd, RDN, ACE, at 626-4760 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Work/Life Support: Please call 621-9870 to learn more about new ways of working. Consultations and group presentations are available regarding University workplace/workforce issues. Flexible scheduling, alternative work arrangements, planning tips, and strategies.

Employee Mini Health Screening: We will come to your department, for groups of 12 or more, assess blood pressure, total cholesterol/HDL, % body fat at your location. Please call 621-2493 to schedule a department screening or for more information.