

Tech Talk

Using Technology to Achieve Your New Year's Eve Resolutions

By Christopher J. Ryan

The dawn of a new year brings with it a bounty of individual wishes and resolutions to inspire and make positive life changes, whether it is to be a better person, more fit and healthy, or quit smoking. Most people set goals, and what may not come as a surprise is most people also don't follow up on the resolutions they set on Jan. 1.

Where's the breakdown occurring in the cycle? I suggest it's a measurement issue and you know what can help with this? Technology!

Whether you want to lose 30 pounds, kick a bad habit, save more money or get better sleep, technology can help you keep your pace. The key takeaway is to measure, measure, measure. So, where do you begin?

On a very primitive technological level, I recommend incorporating an excel spreadsheet. Say you want to quit smoking. Draw up an excel sheet that catalogs the difficulties of quitting smoking and keep a daily tally. Some categories may include the time you wake up, first "craving," number of cravings fought today, etc. Identify your triggers, daily emotions and positive moments (like when you're feeling great about your progress!) too, in a separate log.

Pro-tip: Do 10 squat thrusts every time you want a cigarette, instead of smoking. The natural high will substitute the craving temporarily until you no longer feel the need to smoke. If this is too rigorous, select an activity that gets your blood pumping, suitable for your body.

For someone who wants to overhaul their health and fitness and create a new lifestyle, check out the Jawbone Up or Nike Fuel Band. These two wristband devices track personal goals. The Nike Fuel Band is more goal-oriented for your fitness behavior — making sure you hit your daily target — where as the Jawbone Up is all-encompassing. The device syncs with your smartphone to track your diet, sleeping habits, fitness and exercise, etc. The Nike Fuel Band will set you back a buck-fifty and the Jawbone Up in the area of \$129.95.

A last minute suggestion: Check out the app store on your smartphone. There are hundreds of useful apps to help you achieve your goals (for free) — like task reminder app Astrid, communities with the same interest like Fitocracy, healthy food choice apps like Fooducate and financial tracking apps like Mint.

What resolutions did you make? Let us know by visiting www.facebook.com/longislandtrends.

