

Family Issues

January-February 2006

Information for Southwest Idaho
Area Families and Consumers



Did Your New Year's Resolution Make the Top Ten List?

New Year's Eve has always been a time for looking back to the past, and more importantly, forward to the coming year. It's a time to reflect on the changes we want (or need) to make and resolve to follow through on those changes. Did your New Year resolutions make our top ten list?

1.) Spend More Time with Family & Friends

Recent polls conducted by General Nutrition Centers, Quicken and others shows that more than 50% of Americans vow to appreciate loved ones and spend more time with family and friends this year.

2.) Fit in Fitness

The evidence is in for fitness. Regular exercise has been associated with more health benefits than anything else known to man. Studies show that it reduces the risk of some cancers, increases longevity, helps achieve and maintain weight loss, enhances mood, lowers blood pressure, and even improves arthritis.

3.) Tame the Bulge

Fifty-five percent of adults in America are overweight, so it is not surprising to find that weight loss in one of the most popular New Year's resolutions. Setting reasonable goals and staying focused are the two most important factors in sticking with a lifestyle change.

4.) Quit Smoking

If you have resolved to make this the year that you stamp out your smoking habit, over-the-counter availability of nicotine replacement therapy now provides easier access to proven quit-smoking aids. Even if you've tried to quit before and failed, don't let it get you down. On average, smokers try about four times before they quit for good.

5.) Enjoy Life More

Given the hectic, stressful lifestyles of millions of American, it is no wonder that "enjoying life more" has become a popular resolution in recent years.

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Joey Peutz, Extension Educator

District II

Extension Educators

Family and Consumer Sciences

Beverly Healy	◆	Ada
Linda Gossett	◆	EFNEP
Joey Peutz	◆	Canyon
Marsha Lockard	◆	Owyhee

County Extension Offices

Ada	377-2107
EFNEP	376-1036
Adams	253-4279
Canyon	459-6003
Elmore	587-2136
Gem/Boise	365-6363
Owyhee	896-4104
Payette	642-6022
Valley	382-7190
Washington	414-0415

Family Issues is published six times a year. This newsletter provides current information in the areas of family development, leadership skills, nutrition, food safety, money and time management.

Because You Asked...

Q: My parents recently gave me an electric toothbrush as a gift — one of those ones that supposedly vibrates at 30,000 cycles per second, thereby cleaning the teeth like no manual toothbrush can. Could you tell me whether these brushes really work better than conventional toothbrushes?

A: Your parents have been brushing up on dental hygiene. Studies published in both the *American Journal of Dentistry* and the *British Dental Journal* agree that electric toothbrushes are more effective at removing plaque and reducing gingivitis than manual ones. Electric toothbrushes not only move bristles at a much faster speed than you could possibly achieve manually, but they also remove plaque more evenly in hard-to-reach places, such as between teeth and on back molars.



Currently, the [American Dental Association](#) recommends electric toothbrushes, particularly for people with manual dexterity problems or other physical limitations (such as arthritis) that might make it difficult to use manual toothbrushes.

None of this means, however, that manual toothbrushes are obsolete — just that *most* people in studies do a better cleaning of their teeth with an electric model.

Contributing to people's more active, thorough, and consistent brushing, at least at first, is the curiosity and excitement sparked by using a new gizmo. Only with longer-term studies will we know whether the benefits of electric toothbrushes stick after the newness wears off and laziness sets in. Also, because electric toothbrushes can be pricey (ranging from about \$30 to more than \$100), you might want to first check with your dentist.

Source: University of Columbia
<http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/1831.htm>

Q: I make smoothies using only fresh-squeezed orange juice, yogurt and fresh or frozen fruit (mostly bananas and berries). Is the fiber in the fruit lost by blending them into the smoothie? What about other vitamins and minerals?

A: Not to worry, says Alice H. Lichtenstien, DSc, Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts. You're losing some fiber from the orange by squeezing out the juice and discarding the rest. Otherwise, however, all the fiber should remain, even after combining into a smoothie, and the fruits vitamins and minerals should be intact. Heating can destroy some nutrients but not blending.



*Continued from cover article

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6.) Quit Drinking

While many people use the New Year as an incentive to finally stop drinking, most are not equipped to make such a drastic lifestyle change all at once. Many heavy drinkers fail to quit cold turkey but do much better when they taper gradually, or even learn to moderate their drinking.

7.) Get Out of Debt



Was money a big source of stress in your life last year? Join the millions of Americans who

have resolved to spend this year getting a handle on their finances. It's a promise that will repay itself many times over in the year ahead.

8.) Learn Something New

Have you vowed to make this year the year to learn something new? Perhaps you are considering a career change or just want to learn a new language? Whether you take a course or read a book, you'll find education to be on of the easiest, most motivating New Year's resolution to keep. Challenge your mind in the coming year, and your horizons will expand.

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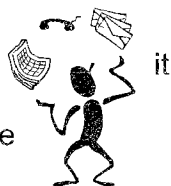
9.) Help Others

A popular, non-selfish New Year's resolution, volunteerism can take many forms. Whether you choose to spend time helping out at your local library, mentoring a child through 4-H, or building a house, these nonprofit volunteer organizations could really use your help.



10.) Get Organized

On just about every New Year resolution top ten list, organization can be a very reasonable goal. Whether you want your home organized enough that you can invite someone over on a whim, or your office organized enough that you can find the stapler when you need it, it is a great way to start the year.



Drinking Your Calories

The leading source of calories in the average American diet used to be from white bread. But Tufts researchers recently reported that now Americans are drinking their calories instead in the form of soda pop and sweetened beverages.

Rising Heating Costs!

The Treasure Valley has experienced some very cold temperatures during the month of December and with the rising heating costs small efforts can make a difference in the bottom line. Here are some ways to stave off the shivers - without going broke.



Lower the temperature. If you can control the thermostat, set it at 72 degrees or lower, advises the U.S. Department of Energy. You'll save about 3 percent on your bill for every degree that you drop, so by sacrificing a few degrees, you'll shave about 9 percent or more off your bill. If you lower your thermostat from 72 to 65 degrees just for the eight hours while you sleep, you'll save 7 percent. "We-Energies" (on-line resource) recommends that you keep the temperature at 68 degrees when you're home and 60 degrees when you're asleep and gone for the day.

While entertaining guests, turn down the heat a little. The extra body heat will help compensate.

Work with the sun. Open the blinds and curtains during the day to bring in the warmth (lower your thermostat at the same time). At night, keep 'em closed to hold in the heat.

Use the ceiling fan. If the fan has a switch, put it in reverse and run it on slow, which will

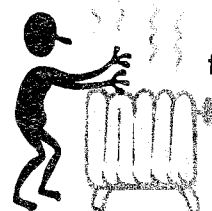
push down the warm air that floats to the ceiling. Keep the kitchen and bathroom fans off, though - those will just suck up the heat.

Warm up in other ways. Using a space heater will drive up electricity costs (about \$32 a month if used for eight hours a day), but it could be a cheaper way to warm up one room. Using an electric blanket for eight hours a night will cost just \$1.60 in increased electricity. (For a handy appliance calculator, go to www.we-energies.com, click on "residential service" and then "understand energy costs.")

Caulk, caulk, caulk. For a few bucks, you can buy a tube to plug up those pesky drafts. Go to the internet and search for: [Draft dodging: Keeping your place warm in the cold](#) for additional ideas on stopping drafts.

Cover the walls. Tack up blankets or quilts inside on exterior walls to keep out the chill.

Don't use the stove or oven to keep the place warm. It's a waste, and it's dangerous.



Change your filter.

Changing your furnace filter will help it run more efficiently. Check your owner's manual for directions, or if you rent, ask your landlord for a replacement.

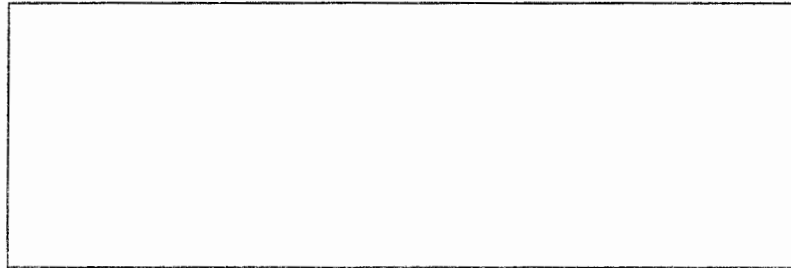
Sources: *We Energies* (www.we-energies.com), *U.S. Department of Energy* (www.doe.gov), *The Dollar Stretcher* (www.stretcher.com).

University of Idaho Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Website will be announced in the next newsletter!

University of Idaho
Cooperative Extension System
Canyon County
PO Box 1058
Caldwell, ID 83606

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Thank You!

2006 Planning

The University of Idaho Extension Educators would like to say a gracious "thank-you" for the opportunity to teach and work with the families of the Treasure Valley during 2005. During the past year we've offered classes and brought you information on family resource management, health, nutrition, food safety, food preservation and many other timely family issues. As we plan for 2006 programs we would like your input. If you have any issues or questions you would like addressed please call one of the Family and Consumer Science Educators. Our goal is to provide families with relevant, researched based information on topics that interest them.

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