Resolutions for the New Year
Let these tips spark some ideas for New Year’s resolutions.

New Year, New You

Have you made your resolutions for the new year? Here are some tips and ideas to help you succeed in your 2-17 resolutions.

1. Make sure your goals are SMART:

If you plan to set goals, make sure they are SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and have a time frame. Add as many intermediate action steps to your goal plan as possible. A written goal with these elements puts your brain to work faster than if you merely have the thoughts in your mind. A few minutes each day taking action on your goals can put you farther ahead in attaining them as opposed to spending hours periodically. There are many goal setting resources on the internet to help you with the goal setting, planning and completion process.

2. Make your goals visual:

Create a vision board with pictures and words of your goals. Put a frame around, which can be as simple as painter’s tape, to give your brain parameters on which to focus. Spending a few minutes a day concentrating intently on the images and words, 2-3 minutes in the morning and at night can be very effective. As you attain your goals, put your completed goals in a binder with the date you accomplished them. This will give you momentum to complete your goals faster. Again, there are many resources on the internet on vision boards, but one I like is 3KeyElements.com.
3. Check your credit report:

Even more important than knowing your credit score, which is often provided for free by credit card companies, is knowing that your credit history is secure and accurate. Incorrect information and fraudulent activity can affect your credit standing greatly. Annualcreditreport.com is the official site to get your free annual credit report for the three credit reporting bureaus, Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian. If you stagger pulling your report throughout the year it will help keep a monitor on your credit. Consider getting your report in January, one at tax time and one in the fall.

4. Make some positive health changes:

You can find useful tips and tools for healthy activity and food choices on ChooseMyPlate.gov. Consider shopping more on the perimeter of the grocery store where you can find healthier choices such as fruit and vegetable produce and dairy and meats. Choose lean dairy and meats. Choose more whole grain products. Making your changes gradually is more effective than trying to do too much and giving up.

5. Monitor your activity level:

Get a good device to track your activity level. If you are tracking steps, 7,500 – 10,000 is considered active, with 10,000 being the better goal of the range. Start where you are and add steps gradually till you reach your goal. Smart phones often have activity tracking options and there are many apps to help with tracking your activity and food intake. Be sure to check with a doctor before beginning an exercise program.

6. Strengthen your family relationships:

Eating dinner together is a great way to increase family togetherness. The benefits of eating together are better communication, better nutrition and better well-being. Eating
dinner around the table has greater benefits than watching TV while eating.

7. Make a plan:

If you have a business or plan to start a business, make sure you have a plan and the know how to run a successful business. Be sure you have thought everything through before starting a business. Many small businesses end within the first two years after owners have put extensive amounts of time and resources into them. There are many business planning tools available through SBA.gov and SBDC.gov. Watch for the Garfield County Business Conference in March, which is open to everyone to attend.

8. Use your USU Extension office as a resource:

Check with your Utah State University Extension county office for classes, resources and information on these and other topics. Or check the state USU Extension website extension.usu.edu for additional information, fact sheets and articles.

This article was written by SuzAnne Jorgensen, Extension Agent, Garfield County