

# SAFETY FIRST



February, 2023

*Anger is like milk, it should not be kept too long.* –Phyllis Bottome



## Common Causes of Injury

**Slips, Trips and falls.** These continue to be a leading cause of injury. Culprits include slick floors & high-traffic corridors, improper footwear or worn soles, rushing & inclement weather.

**Lifting.** Lifting an object that is too heavy can lead to muscle sprain, strain, or tear. Use mechanical means when possible or get help for a heavy lift – back injuries can cause a lifetime of PAIN!

**Fatigue.** Failing to take a break, especially to recover from physical labor, can lead to inattention and accidents. Inadequate sleep is also associated with a variety of health concerns including obesity and heart ailments.

**Dehydration.** This can pose a serious health risk. The answer is simple -- drink plenty of water especially in hot environments.

**Poor lighting.** Insufficient lighting is responsible for many slip and fall incidents. OSHA requires adequate lighting in all workplaces. Don't overlook the need in offices, warehouses, and parking garages.

**Hazardous materials.** Improper handling of hazardous materials or not wearing proper PPE is a common cause of illness. Haz-Com is often on the OSHA list of top violations.

## The Psychology of New Year's Resolutions

Research has shown that about half of all adults make New Year's resolutions. However, fewer than 10% manage to keep them for more than a few months.

As a professor of behavioral addiction, I know how easy people can fall into bad habits and why on trying to give up those habits it is easy to relapse. Resolutions usually come in the form of lifestyle changes and changing behavior that has become routine and habitual (even if they are not problematic) can be hard to do.

The most common resolutions are: losing weight, doing more exercise, quitting smoking and saving money.

The main reason that people don't stick to their resolutions is that they set too many or they're unrealistic to achieve. They may also be victims of "false hope syndrome". False hope syndrome is characterized by a person's unrealistic expectations about the likely speed, amount, ease and consequences of changing their behavior.

For some people, it takes something radical for them to change their ways. It took a medical diagnosis to make me give up alcohol and caffeine and it took pregnancy for my partner to give up smoking.

To change your day-to-day behavior, you also have to change your thinking. But there are tried and tested ways that can help people stick to their resolutions – here are my personal favorites:

**Be realistic.** You need to begin by making resolutions that you can keep and that are practical. If you want to reduce your alcohol intake because you tend to drink alcohol every day, don't immediately go teetotal. Try to cut out alcohol every other day or have a drink once every three days. Also, breaking up the longer-term goal into more manageable short-term goals can be beneficial and more rewarding. The same principle can be applied to exercise or eating more healthily.

**Do one thing at a time.** One of the easiest routes to failure is to have too many resolutions. If you want to be fitter and healthier, do just one thing at a time. Give up drinking. Give up smoking. Join a gym. Eat more healthily. But don't do them all at once, just choose one and do your best to stick to it. Once you have got one thing under your control, you can begin a second resolution.

**Be SMART.** Anyone working in a job that includes setting goals will know that goals should be SMART, that is, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. Resolutions shouldn't be any different. Cutting down alcohol drinking is an admirable goal, but it's not SMART. Drinking no more than two units of alcohol every other day for one month is a SMART resolution. Connecting the resolution to a specific goal can also be motivating, for example, dropping a dress size or losing two inches off your waistline in time for the next summer holiday.

**Tell someone your resolution.** Letting family and friends know that you have a New Year's resolution that you really want to keep will act as both a safety barrier and a face-saver. If you really want to cut down smoking or drinking, real friends won't put temptation in your way and can help monitor your behavior. Don't be afraid to ask for help and support from those around you.

**Change your behavior with others.** Trying to change habits on your own can be difficult. For instance, if you and your partner both smoke, drink and eat unhealthily, it is hard for one partner to change their behavior if the other is still engaged in the same old bad habits. By having the same resolution, such as going on a diet, the chances of success will improve.

**Don't limit yourself.** Changing your behavior, or some aspect of it, doesn't have to be restricted to the start of the New Year. It can be anytime.

Accept lapses as part of the process. It's inevitable that when trying to give up something (alcohol, cigarettes, junk food) that there will be lapses. You shouldn't feel guilty about giving in to your cravings but accept that it is part of the learning process. Unhealthy habits can take years to become ingrained and there are no quick fixes in making major lifestyle changes. These may be clichés, but we learn by our mistakes and every day is a new day – and you can start each day afresh.

If you think this all sounds like too much hard work and that it's not worth making resolutions to begin with, bear in mind that people who make New Year's resolutions are ten times more likely to achieve their goals than those who don't.