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The Home

Deb Arseneau, Extension Educator, HHS

arseneau@purdue.edu

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January/ February 2017



Happy New Year! Have you made any New Year's resolutions yet? Managing your budget, losing weight, and exercising are ideas that often top the lists for resolutions. One inspirational leader I follow on Facebook suggested making a list of 101 resolutions. Wow! I thought she was crazy, but as I started working on a list, I found that a list that long does two things. One, it makes you start to be more specific so you can hit 101 ideas. For example, instead of writing down start exercising, write down that you plan to do a 30 second plank every day or go for a 15 minute walk at lunch time. Secondly, it forces you to dream a little bigger. Instead of listing the obvious or traditional resolutions, making a list of 101 makes you think about a greater variety of things you could do such as starting a new hobby, getting outdoors more often, or paying your co-workers a compliment.

Resolutions Cont. :

Whatever you decide, whether you make one or 101 resolutions, think about setting achievable goals, and make a plan that defines what you will do each day to meet your goals. Take a look at this list to get your creativity started:



| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Start a meditation practice | Be more grateful | Compliment someone every day |
| Learn something new each day | Stop procrastinating | Be kinder to yourself |
| Start a new hobby | Spend more time in nature | Choose a positive attitude each morning |
| Eat fewer calories | Start doing planks every day | Find ways to strengthen a relationship |
| Write a business plan | Enjoy the little things in life | Reach out to meet new people |
| Read more books | Learn a new skill | Become a volunteer |



Personal Finance: Just Do a Few Key Things Right



Personal finance does not have to be complicated. Rather, most people can manage their finances quite well by doing just a few key things right. Below are ten suggestions to consider as New Year's resolutions to improve your personal finances during 2017:

Spend Less Than You Earn— Live below your means. The only way to “find” money to save and invest is to have money left over after expenses. Shop around for bargains (e.g., online promo codes, price matching, and consignment and thrift shops) and ask yourself whether you really need something before you buy it.

Save at Least 10 Percent of Your Income— Put money into savings automatically via payroll deduction or electronic fund transfers. Many people who have money taken out of their paycheck, for retirement, or their checking account, to invest in mutual funds, say they never miss the money and are a lot more financially secure. If 10% savings is not possible now, save whatever you can and gradually ramp up your savings level over time.

Invest for the Long Term— Don't trade too much; market timing is very difficult. If you don't have the time or energy to research individual stocks, keep things simple and invest through no-load mutual funds, index funds, or exchange-traded funds. Never invest with cold-callers and be very skeptical of investments that sound like “guaranteed” winners. Stick with reputable companies and experienced and well-vetted investment advisors.

Don't Run Up Your Credit Cards— Going deep into debt for clothes, travel, or restaurant meals will not impress your friends. Instead, impress them with your kindness and sense of humor. Monthly payments on all consumer debts combined (excluding a mortgage) should not exceed 15% -20% of monthly take-home pay.



Set Goals- What are you saving for? A nice house? Retirement? College for your children? Keep your eye on your goals and it will be easier to make sacrifices (read: spend less) to reach them. Calculate the savings required to reach your goals by dividing the time to save into the dollar cost.

Purchase Insurance Wisely– Examples of generally unnecessary insurance include extended warranties on appliances and low deductibles on property insurance. Rather, cover big financial risks including adequate liability insurance and disability insurance to protect your family if you are ill and can't bring home a paycheck.

Be Patient– Similar to the progression to large prizes on the TV show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, it usually takes people a long time to build wealth. The average age of millionaires is 60, meaning that they've been investing for about three or four decades. Using the Rule of 72, if an investor earns an 8% average return on a diversified investment portfolio, their money will double in nine years (72 divided by 8).

Dollar-Cost Average Investment Deposits– This means investing a regular sum (e.g., \$100) at a regular time interval (e.g., monthly), preferably through automatic deposits such as payroll deductions for the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Dollar-cost averaging avoids bad market timing and takes the emotion out of investing because regularly scheduled investment deposits take place automatically regardless of market conditions.

Limit "Shocks" to Finances– Financial shocks include frequent job changes, moving, home purchases, health care expenses, and divorce. Conversely, stability aids in wealth accumulation. Try to control what you can (e.g., good health habits). Unfortunately, military families often move frequently and this lifestyle needs to be factored into decisions such as renting vs. buying a home and a military spouse's career path.

Congratulate Yourself for Making Progress– If you hear that you need, say, \$500,000 or \$1 million to retire in comfort, you might feel too depressed to try to save anything. Instead, celebrate milestones such as paying off your credit cards or saving \$1,000. You have a lot to be proud of as long as you're headed in the right direction. Source: <https://militaryfamilies.extension.org/2016/12/13/just-do-a-few-key-things-right/>



Coming next spring:

Growing Healthy Active Kids: An educational day for those that work with preschool aged children is being planned by the Area Health & Human Sciences educators. A tentative date is set for Saturday, March 11 at the Wright Center near West Lafayette. Watch the website for details.

Photography Workshop: Leigh Littiken and Barbara Lucas will be presenting a photography class on Saturday, March 18 at Beaver Township Community Building from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Barbara specializes in Outdoor and Wildlife photography and Leigh specializes in portraiture. They encourage you to bring whatever camera you use, whether it be your cell phone, a DSLR or anything in between. Depending on the weather, we may take a little field trip with this class as well. The class size will be limited to 20 participants. Contact the Extension Office at 219-285-8620 ext 2800 if interested. More information and a flyer will be on our website after the first of the year.





Extension Homemaker Notes

Provided by Nancy Jo



This newsletter is being written December 15 and at this time there are 136 pounds of nuts for sale in the Extension Office as follows: 15 Pecan Halves, 8 Pecan Pieces, 14 Walnuts, 11 Cashews, 15 Chocolate Covered Cashews, 8 Praline Pecans, 19 Chocolate Amaretto Pecans, 8 Dark Chocolate Pecans, 7 Pistachios, 10 Chocolate Almonds, 14 Honey Roasted Peanuts & 7 Chocolate Peanuts. These are sold out: Roasted & Salted Pecan Halves, Mixed Nuts & Chocolate Raisins. If you are traveling from a distance, call 219-285-8620, ext. 2800 for availability and please pay when purchasing. If there is still an abundance of nuts left at the January Council meeting, they will be divided among the clubs for members to sell them.

Thanks to Carol Light for hosting the scrumptious Holiday luncheon at her beautiful country home for the 13 who could attend.

The next county council meeting will be Thursday, January 26 at 1:30 at the Government Center. Agendas will be sent mid-January. On the agenda: review of bylaws, Feb 15 deadline for First-Timer and scholarships, set dates for program book, budget & nominating committees, submit ideas to cut the budget, choose a hostess for Achievement Night, and do you want finger foods at April 27 council?

Meanwhile, the special creative arts contest for Home and Family Conference June 5 – 7 will be handmade hats. The entries will be judged at the April council. Your entry will be disqualified if you embellish a purchased hat. The hat must be completely handmade by you and within the last 2 years. Please continue to crochet and knit 34" x 70" shawls for the Indiana Donor Network. These can be turned in at the Friday, March 17 Lafayette District meeting in Fountain County. Homemaker volunteer hours forms from each club are due to Nancy Jo Prue, Wednesday, March 1, 2017. Please include how many times you harvested produce from your garden, bought peaches or blueberries, and visited a farmers market or farm to table restaurant since March 1, 2016 for the Eat Local, Eat Healthy project.

Hope everyone has/had a Merry Christmas and will have a Happy New 2017!

Coming next spring continued:

Dining with Diabetes: Look for the flyer in this newsletter for details on the Dining with Diabetes program offered in March/April. Contact the Extension Office at **219.285.8620 ext 2800** to register.

Family Nature Program: According to research, children who play outdoors regularly have more active imaginations and play more creatively, have lower stress levels and higher problem solving skills and have enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence. A group of Purdue Extension Educators recently developed a unit on the *Benefits of Connecting with Nature*. We are in the midst of planning a Family Nature Program for this Spring as well. Activities will include a variety outdoor experiences. Watch for details online and in the March/April newsletter.

