

Living Well

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER FOR NORTHEAST COLORADO



January – February, 2021



Successful New Year's Resolution

This time of year finds many setting New Year's resolutions. Two key words to remember when setting a goal is **realistic** and **specific**. A realistic goal means it is possible to reach, and that is motivation in itself. A specific goal also helps create a game plan to execute the goal.

I want to lose weight this year. (*Realistic but very vague*)

I am going to get 30 minutes of exercise in 4 days a week this year.
(*Specific and Obtainable*)

I want to lose 40 pounds. (How? Time Frame? Needs to be specific.)

Write your goal down somewhere you will see it frequently and it stays fresh in your mind. New Year's Resolutions are often forgotten before the upcoming New Year.

Have a checklist for your plan so you can track your progression. This also gives more "immediate" gratification for your hard work and keeps you dedicated.

Reward yourself when you reach milestones towards your goal as well!

Be flexible. Plans can always change, and it is important to adapt to changes. Even if you must start over, you are still closer to your goal than if you quit!

Good luck reaching your goals!

Joy Akey

Yuma County
joy.akey@colostate.edu
(970) 332-4151

Morgan County
(970) 542-3540

Gisele Jefferson

Washington County
gisele.jefferson@colostate.edu
(970) 345-2287

Deeona Johnston

Phillips County
deeona.johnston@colostate.edu
(970) 854-3616

Logan County
(970) 522-3200, Ext. 2

McKayla Stephen

Kit Carson County
mckayla.stephen@colostate.edu
(719) 346-5571

Extension Online

<https://goldenplains.extension.colostate.edu/>

<https://logan.extension.colostate.edu/>

https://morgan.extension.colostate.edu

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Aging in Place

Most people want to stay in their own homes as they age, but often don't think about the kinds of modifications they may later need to make that possible. The best time to prepare your home to age in place is when you are still healthy and financially able to make the modifications that will be vital to your future.

Here's some tips to consider:

Stairs:

Mobility problems often occur later in life to make climbing stairs difficult, if not impossible. Consider adding a first-floor bedroom and full bath. If this is not an option, consider a stair lift.

Bathroom:

To increase safety, independence and dignity, consider a curbless shower with a wide entry completely level with the bathroom floor. This allows for a safe transition to a walker or shower chair. A handheld showerhead and a built-in tile bench or teak seat make showering easier to sit instead of stand. Switching to a taller toilet means less difficulty getting up and down. Consider buying one with a built-in bidet feature which is extremely helpful for personal hygiene. The bidet may help with avoiding urinary tract infections, which can be particularly dangerous during the senior years. Strategically placed and professionally installed grab bars are essential to avoid slips and falls, especially for people with balance problems. Falls are one of the most common reasons people can no longer live safely at home.

Kitchen:

There are several considerations that may require moving and replacing appliances. The microwave, which many seniors use more often than the oven, needs to be on the counter or a cart to make it safer to retrieve a hot bowl of soup with unsteady hands. The cooktop or range top should have knobs in the front or side to keep from having to reach across hot burners to get to them. A refrigerator with a freezer on the bottom is easier than one with the freezer on top for finding and taking out items. A touch faucet at the kitchen sink is ideal for people with hand arthritis. Install pullout shelves in deep cabinets to eliminate having to hunt around for kitchen items or food staples. Upgrade overhead and under-cabinet lighting to make it easier to see as vision becomes less sharp.

Bedroom:

Anchoring bookcases, dressers and wardrobes to walls makes it much safer for senior who might grab onto furniture for support. Place nonskid pads under the legs of nightstands and other moveable furniture to prevent them from sliding. If a walker is needed, the bed should be positioned with enough clearance to maneuver it easily. A bed rail can be added for a secure handhold, making it easier to get in and out of bed.

Around the House:

Switch door handles to levers and change light switches from toggles to paddles. Review the lighting in each room. It's best to have overhead lights to eliminate lamps and cords. Consider motion-sensor lighting at floor level along the hallways from bedroom to bathroom. Measure doorways to make sure they can accommodate a walker or wheelchair. Remove area rugs and clutter on the floor to eliminate tripping hazards. Wood or wood-like flooring is much easier for maneuvering a walker or wheelchair, and easier on the lungs of anyone with respiratory issues. Make charging stations for electronic devices in living room and bedrooms. Consider moving a wall outlet higher up the wall for easy access. Check the closets for easy access and adjustable shelving or hang bars may make life easier, as well as a good light.

Source: Bottom Line Health, January 2021



Don't Make Resolutions-Make Good Habits



At the start of each year, some people set New Year's resolutions. Common resolutions are healthier eating, increased physical activity, saving money, decreased debt, improved personal relationships, quitting smoking, learning a new hobby or skill, and reading more. Other people avoid making resolutions completely because they never follow through with them.

One reason New Year's resolutions are so difficult to keep is they require a change in behavior. Examples are eating less or doing more exercise to lose weight, and decreased spending to reduce debt or save money. Change is hard! People tend to resist it because it requires a lot of mental energy, willpower, and motivation to do things differently. It is much easier to stick with the status quo, especially if you do not have a clearly defined action plan with detailed steps for how to go about changing.

Whether you call your personal goals New Year's resolutions or not, there is a better way to achieve them: create good habits. When an action becomes a habit, you do not have to remember when, where, why, or how to do it. It gets done because it becomes part of your daily routine. Below is some useful information about habits summarized from the book *Transform Your Habits* by James Clear:



- Personal habits- good or bad- are the result of many small decisions people make over time.
- Our lives today (e.g., finances, health, career achievements) are a reflection of our past habits.
- To make personal changes, focus on habits and routines rather than events or success metrics.
- There are three steps to effective habit change called the 3 R's:
 - Reminders are “triggers” that can initiate behaviors (e.g., walking laps at lunch or before you leave work).
 - Routines are behaviors; i.e., the actions people take (e.g., saving money and paying bills out of each paycheck).
 - Rewards are the benefits gained from changed behaviors (e.g., watching savings grow; and not stressing over money every month).
- Decide who you want to be and prove it to yourself every day (e.g., lose 10 pounds by walking more; or save money for your next vacation).
- Set schedules- not deadlines (e.g., designated times for physical activity and financial check-up activities).

Another strategy for successfully achieving goals is “habit stacking,” i.e., incorporating a desired behavior into something you already do. Health-related examples are going to a gym on the way from work and flossing your teeth after brushing them. Financial examples are dropping loose change into a jar when you walk in the door from work or doing errands and depositing the tallied up loose change into a savings account.

Do you want to improve some aspect of your life in New Year? Create good habits. Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and financially secure year in 2021.

Resources: Financial Fitness Quiz <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/money/assessment-tools/financial-fitness-quiz.pdf>

Give Yourself a Financial Check-Up <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/message/message.php?p=Finance&m=62>

Financial Wellness Test <https://www.moneymanagement.org/tools/financial-wellness-test>

Adapted from : Barbara O'Neill, Ph.D., CFP®; Distinguished Professor and Extension Financial Management Specialist Emeritus; Rutgers Cooperative Extension; <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/message/message.php?p=Finance&m=1412>

Metabolic Syndrome: What is it and how can I prevent or control it?

Up to 1/3 of American adults have metabolic syndrome. What does that mean and how does it affect your health? Metabolic Syndrome is a condition that increases a person's risk of developing chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. A person is diagnosed with Metabolic Syndrome when they have at least 3 of the 5 conditions below. If you only have 1 or 2 of the conditions, you do not have metabolic syndrome, but you can have an increased risk for chronic diseases.

Obesity: In particular, abdominal obesity (around your waist). For men, this is a waist measurement of 40+ inches and for women, it's 35+ inches. This is of concern because of the location of the extra fat tissue. Your waist is where most of your organs are located, so this places more fat closer to your organs.

Increased blood pressure: Currently the criteria for increased blood pressure is 130+ mm Hg for the top number (systolic) and 85+ mm Hg for the bottom number (diastolic). A normal blood pressure is less than 120 mm Hg for systolic and less than 80 mm Hg for diastolic (120/80).

High blood sugar: If you have a fasting glucose test of 100 mg/dL or more, then you have high blood sugar. A fasting glucose test assesses the amount of sugar in your blood when you haven't eaten for at least 8 hours. If your fasting glucose is greater than 100 mg/dL, you are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

Low HDL cholesterol: HDL (high-density lipoproteins) are the good cholesterol that circulates throughout your blood. For good cholesterol, we want our HDL to be 60+ mg/dL, low HDL is lower than 40 mg/dL.

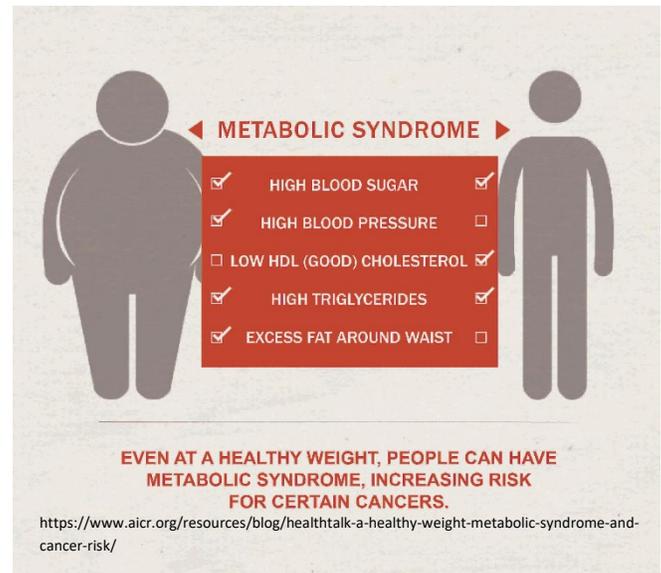
High triglycerides: Triglycerides are fats in your blood. If you have high triglycerides, 150+ mg/dL, then you have an increased risk of heart disease.

What can I do to prevent or fight against Metabolic Syndrome?

Metabolic Syndrome is closely linked with obesity, so losing weight is recommended. Small lifestyle and diet changes can lead to weight loss which helps reduce the risk of developing metabolic syndrome and other chronic diseases. Try these heart-healthy substitutions!

- Whole milk → Fat-free or 1% milk
- Ice Cream → Sherbet, sorbet, or low-fat frozen yogurt
- Fried Chicken Strips or breaded chicken sandwich → Grilled chicken sandwich
- White breads, buns, and other baked good → Whole Grain options (hint: Check the label! If the first ingredient isn't 100% whole wheat or whole grain, then it's not a whole grain option)
- Sour Cream → Fat-Free Sour Cream, low-fat Greek yogurt with spices, or low-fat cottage cheese

Physical activity has been shown to be essential in losing weight and reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. The recommendation is at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week. This sounds like a lot of time, but when you break it down, it's 30 minutes 5 days a week. Moderate physical activity includes brisk walking, cleaning the house, gardening/yard work, recreational swimming, shoveling snow, horseback riding, dancing and many other activities that increase your heart rate.



Movement Builds a Child's Brain

Most people know physical activity helps children and adults to maintain a healthy body – and helps build brain structure! Research shows a link between cognitive development and movement, meaning children need opportunities to move so they can learn. Rolling, crawling, skipping, and jumping, along with a variety of other movement activities, build the brain during the first years of a child's life.

At birth, a baby's brain contains 100 billion brain cells, roughly as many as there are stars in the Milky Way, and almost all the brain cells we'll ever have. Brain nerve cells called neurons are present at birth and eventually form trillions of connections over the first years of life depending on the child's life experiences. These neural connections start to send messages to each other to meet the requirements of the body and brain. Compare this to posting messages to friends on Facebook or Instagram. If you send a message to 500 friends, and each of those friends, in turn, forwards that message to another 500 friends, and so on, the messages or signals expand exponentially.



This messaging is important for the brain-body connection. The ability of the brain to develop and maintain neural connections is based on new movement and play experiences of young children. Brain cell connections are lost or pruned away as a result of limited activity or stimulation. "Move it or lose it" is true for both children and adults.



Researchers say there are "windows of opportunity," or sensitive periods, in children's lives when specific types of learning take place. For instance, the neurons for vision begin sending messages back and forth rapidly at two to four months of age, peaking in intensity at eight months. Babies begin to take much more notice of the world during this period. If a child misses this opportunity, it does not mean the child will be impaired, but the brain may not develop circuitry to its full potential in that area. The nervous system continues to mature until the ages of 15 to 20 years..

Brain development does not stop after early childhood, but the window narrows, making it harder for adults to learn skills they missed during childhood. "It is a child's activity level and active playtime that determines his or her ultimate brain development and the extent of adult capabilities" (Dotson-Renta 2016).

Children need to move to activate the brain. The brain responds in full force allowing them to move in a variety of ways including crossing the mid-lines. Songs like "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" and "Hokey Pokey" are examples of crossing the midlines of the body. The motions to the songs encourage children to cross all three body mid-lines, reaching the top to bottom, left to right, and front to back. These physical movements demand coordination from both the left and right sides of the brain. This strengthens the tissues called the corpus callosum that divides the two sides of the brain and is important for communication from one side of the brain to the other. These movements help develop and strengthen neural pathways laying the foundation for further development in language, literacy, and math skills.

Crossing mid-lines can help stimulate brain activity in adults too. Try this activity. Extend one arm straight in front of you. It doesn't matter which one. Point your index finger, and draw a large, imaginary figure 8 lying on its side, crossing left to right in front of your body. Run your finger along this imaginary figure several times. Now switch to the opposite arm. It may be harder since it is probably your non-dominant arm. Trace the same large figure 8 several times. This activity stimulates both sides of your brain and refreshes your thinking process. It might help you get through those long afternoon workdays.

One easy way to boost your child's brainpower is through movement activities. Turn on your children's favorite music and have a dance party. Don't worry about winning a dance contest. Children are natural movers, so follow their lead and learn a new dance move or two. Take turns playing your favorite songs, too. Children get a kick out of dancing to a variety of music, and it gives you a break from children's songs the entire time. You'll have so much fun and no one will realize you're building your child's brain!

Adapted from: <https://extension.psu.edu/movement-builds-a-childs-brain>

Outdoor Winter Activities for Kids and Adults

Spending time outside during the winter can do you and your family a lot of good. Getting outdoors during the winter months offers both physical and psychological benefits.

Better Creative Thinking - Research published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology found walking helped promote creative thinking in 81% of study participants, and walking outdoors created more creative ideas than walking indoors.

Boost your Vitamin D -- Harvard Health reports vitamin D is an essential element in fighting everything from heart attacks to cancer to depression. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, we spend 90% of our time indoors, so we're not getting enough exposure to sunlight. A recent study reported in JAMA found two-thirds of U.S. teens and adults are deficient in vitamin D. So, the recommendation is get your daily dose of sun exposure — 10 to 15 minutes or more.

A study in the journal Nature found people who spent at least 30 minutes per week in a green space, such as a park, had lower blood pressure and rates of depression. The study also cites 17 other research projects that linked time outdoors to positive health effects, such as: lowered stress, fewer allergies, greater social well-being, and lower mortality from cardiovascular disease



Spending time outdoors also helps prevent nature-deficit disorder, especially in children. Richard Louv, author of *"Last Child in the Woods,"* said "nature-deficit disorder can result in multiple physical and mental ailments, including diminished use of the senses, higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses, attention difficulties, an increased rate of nearsightedness, and child and adult obesity.

Spending time outdoors might actually speed up your body's healing process. A study by University of Pittsburgh found patients who underwent spinal surgery and stayed in the hospital's sunniest unit experienced less pain and stress and needed 22% less medication per hour than patients in darker units.

Prepare for the cold. There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing. Layers are essential. Wear thermal leggings under your jeans and several moisture-wicking layers under your sweater. Wear a hat and gloves. When you do go out, always pack a complete change of clothes for each child as well as plenty of snacks and drinks.

Start small. Tell yourself you're only going to go outside for 15 minutes. Once those 15 minutes are up, you can come back inside. You're not talking yourself into going on a daylong snowshoeing excursion — you're going outside for 15 minutes. Anyone can do that. And when you get outdoors and start moving around, you begin to warm up. The cold air invigorates your system, and you feel good. That first 15 minutes can quickly turn into 30 minutes before you realize it.

Adapted from: <https://www.moneycrashers.com/fun-outdoor-winter-activities-kids-adults/>

Resources for Winter Fun Ideas:

Family Time – Winter – child 2-3 <https://extension.psu.edu/family-time-winter-child-ages-2-3> and Family Time - Winter – child 7-8 <https://extension.psu.edu/family-time-winter-child-ages-7-8>

50 Essential Winter Activities for Families <https://www.todayparent.com/family/activities/50-essential-winter-activities/#gallery/50-essential-winter-activities-for-the-whole-family/slide-1>

Top 10 Wintertime Neighborhood Games <https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/outdoor-activities/top-10-wintertime-neighborhood-games>

49 Fun Winter Activities You Can Still Enjoy (Even During a Pandemic) <https://www.realsimple.com/holidays-entertaining/entertaining/seasonal-events/winter-activities-during-covid>

Run Wild My Child: <https://runwildmychild.com/tips-for-getting-kids-outdoors/>



Upcoming Events!

- **2021 A Healthier Weigh – Health & Fitness Challenge – January – March**

The 2021 "A Healthier Weigh" challenge is set to begin in seven eastern Colorado counties in early January. There will be a staggered start as each county has setup their own registration and weigh-in date. However, the educational content of the program will be consistent for all counties. The



AHW challenge encourages increasing activity, making wise food choices, and living a healthier lifestyle in 2021. **A Healthier Weigh** challenge uses social support of a team or partner. Research suggests enlisting family and friends in the effort may help with initial success in weight loss and in keeping the weight off.

In a recent study, participants who enrolled in a weight-loss program with friends did a better job of keeping their weight off. Two-thirds of those who enrolled with friends had kept their weight off six months after the meetings ended. In contrast, only a quarter of those who attended on their own had achieved that same success. The American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) did a study on accountability and found that you have a 65% of completing a goal if you commit to someone. And if you have a specific accountability appointment with a person you've committed, you will increase your chance of success by up to 95%.

- **Virtual Live and Recorded Exercise Classes** – Classes will be at <https://www.zumba.dance/>. Recorded Classes will be available Monday-Thursday starting at 5am. They will be available for 24 hours after registration. Live Stream classes are available Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. STRONG classes are 6am Monday and Wednesday and 5:30pm Thursday. ZUMBA is held 6pm Thursday and 6am Friday.

- **Strengthening Families Program 10-14 Facilitator Training – Coming Soon to NE Colorado!**

Make a difference in your community – become a certified facilitator! The SFP 10-14 is the #1 prevention program for long-term effects on substance use and misuse, helps parents/caregivers learn skills to support their child and effectively discipline and guide their youth, and gives youth healthy future orientation, increased appreciation for parents/caregivers and skills for dealing with stress and peer pressure. The three day training is scheduled to be held in Yuma. For more information, please contact Joy Akey at the Yuma County Extension Office (joy.akey@colostate.edu / 970-332-4151)

- **Nutrition Misinformation Webinar** – January 19, 2021 5:30 – 6:30 pm. Sponsored by CSU Alumni Association. Register at: <https://advancing.colostate.edu/NUTRITIONMISINFORMATION>



CSU Extension – NE Colorado FCS – In this time of no/limited personal contact, we're all using social media!

<https://www.facebook.com/CSUExtensionNortheastFCS>

<https://www.facebook.com/PhillipsCountyExtension/>

CSU Extension – Logan County: https://www.facebook.com/csuextensionlogancounty/?_tn_=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCS5-NbtiQryVNn5X513c5--hwVu-1ZfnhynwZsPotP7AZIVStJaoCEoaVYzZjBFhCH0tHJLHaJxQuQ

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