

Set Goals for a Healthy, Balanced Year

By

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Start the new year by focusing on balanced living and heart health. Jobs, family errands, and other daily demands can be hard on your physical and mental health. Determine to set some goals and make heart healthy changes, such as reducing stress, eating healthy, being physically active, and aiming for a healthy weight. Let's look at each one of these individually.

First of all, by **reducing stress**, take time to relax for at least 30 minutes each day by listening to music and reading a book. Also, limit the amount of screen time you spend each day to no more than two hours a day. This is time spent watching television or working at your computer. Try to get at least seven to nine hours of sleep each night. This should become easier as you lessen screen time and focus more on relaxation. Secondly, **eat healthy**, which means replacing full-fat versions of foods, such as milk, yogurt, and salad dressing, with the fat-free or low-fat kind. Make a conscious effort to increase your fruit and vegetable consumption, also. Just making these changes in your eating habits will help you feel better and shed a few excess pounds. I am including a delicious recipe in this column to help you on your way. Thirdly, **being more physically active** will raise your metabolism and help you burn more calories. Walk, or do some sort of regular physical activity that you enjoy doing for at least 2 ½ hours a week. The fourth and last goal of **aiming for a healthy weight** should be more easily attained by eating healthy and increasing your physical activity. Your weight will just naturally begin to drop as you make these other healthy changes in your lifestyle. I hope by being reminded of these four very attainable healthy and balanced life goals, that you will begin to see positive changes in yourself and will feel successful in managing your health. Success breeds success and better health is the ultimate outcome and one worth working toward.

I am including a heart healthy recipe in my column this month that will appeal to adults and children alike a simple and delicious way to add vegetables to your meal **cinnamon glazed carrots**. Try them and begin your goal of becoming more healthy in 2011!

Cinnamon Glazed Carrots

4 cups baby carrots, rinsed and split in half lengthwise; cover with water in pan and bring to a boil and cover. Cook until still firm but easily pierced with a fork. At end of cooking time, drain carrots in a colander. In the same pan combine the ingredients for the glaze. Glaze: 2 Tablespoons soft tub margarine; 2 Tablespoons brown sugar; ½ teaspoon cinnamon; and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Mix until well blended. (Option: heat in microwave to soften margarine.) Add cooked baby carrots to glaze and mix well. Serve as a delightful side dish with any meal. Adults and children alike will love them! For more information about healthy eating, contact the Hardee County Extension Service at 863-773-2164.