Just get started!

The start of a new year seems to be an ideal time to commit anew to making all those positive health-related changes that have evaded us for years. So what do we do? We make a list of New Year’s resolutions and proudly tell anyone who will listen that this year we are making the changes. Then February rolls around and we can hardly even remember what changes we were planning on making. Maybe that’s because we felt so good about making the resolution that we lost our motivation to make the change. Here’s an idea- stop making resolutions, and just get started!

Caring for our health deserves more than lip service year after year. Not sure where to start? Since February is Healthy Heart Month, why not start with the heart? And the Mayo Clinic has a simple 2-week start-up plan that makes a lot of sense called “Eat 5, Move 10, Sleep 8.”

First, eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. That won’t happen automatically for most people so plan your eating carefully. It will be much easier to get the 5 servings in if you include fruit at every breakfast and change your snacks to raw veggies. Next, move for at least 10 minutes a day at a moderate to vigorous intensity that elevates your heart rate and breathing. The key is doing it 5-6 days a week. Eventually, try to extend it to 20-30 minutes at least 4 times a week, but for now just start with 10. Finally, sleep 8 hours at night. That may seem like a lot, but it’s a great goal. Every day it seems new research comes out heralding the benefits of a good night’s sleep on both the body and the brain. So, just say no – to resolutions- and say yes to getting started. Besides you’ll discover that it’s much more fun to tell your friends what you DID rather than what you planning to DO.

Messiah Wellness Program News

February Wellness Workshop- “Caring for your shoulder- before and after it hurts”
Tuesday, Feb. 16, 11:30-12:15 PM in Parmer Cinema; Presented by Matt Lewis, Ph.D., HHP Dep’t

“Exercising to Brazil” – Join other Messiah employees in keeping track of your exercise during the spring semester. It’s simple to register and only takes seconds to record each day. All participants will receive a pedometer to record steps, but those who would prefer recording their minutes of exercise instead of wearing a pedometer can also participate. The tracker will convert your minutes to steps.

Every 2000 steps will equal a mile, and Brazil is 4680 miles from PA. The program starts on Feb. 14 and runs for 8 weeks. Registration instructions can be found in this week’s mass email or at the wellness website: http://www.messiah.edu/info/20897/wellness All participants will be eligible for weekly prize-drawings and receive interesting facts about the Olympic and the country of Brazil along the way.

HOW CLOSE CAN WE GET TO BRAZIL BEFORE THE SEMESTER ENDS???
Gotta love your heart!

While February is a great month to focus on loving others, it is also a great month to remind us to treat our own hearts with loving care! Here are some important ways we can keep our hearts strong, healthy, and fit.

1. **Good Nutrition**
   Be kind to your heart by avoiding trans fats, and high levels of saturated fat, sodium, and sugar in your diet. On the other hand, raisins, whole grains, beans, salmon, tuna, nuts, tomatoes, apples, berries, and green tea can all be part of a healthy heart diet.

2. **Lower Stress**
   Stress pays a heavy toll on the heart. Spend a few minutes each day calming your spirit. Find a relaxing activity you enjoy, such as reading, listening to music, hanging out with friends, or taking a walk in the woods. Lowering your stress lowers your risk of heart disease.

3. **Maintain a Healthy Weight**
   Maintaining a healthy weight is good for the heart. Focus on the right balance of lifestyle activity with a well-balanced diet that matches caloric expenditure. Avoid harmful, low-calorie fad diets.

4. **Stop Smoking**
   Smoking increases blood pressure and the risk of blood clots. Quitting smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke can actually begin to reverse blood vessel and heart damage, decreasing heart disease risk.

5. **Physical Activity**
   Incorporating physical activity into your daily routine is essential for a healthy heart. 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week can reduce elevated blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Sources
http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartAttack/PreventionTreatmentofHeartAttack/Lifestyle-Changes_UCM_303934_Article.jsp#.VrK42f8UXug; http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/expert-answers/healthy-heart/faq-20057842