

## **Keto Goals to Kick Off a New Year**

Is it just us, or is everyone talking New Year's resolutions right about now? January is here and with it the possibility of a fresh start and an occasion to turn over a new leaf. 2017 is going to be your year, you tell yourself. The year you:

- Keep your promise to hit the gym three times per week.
- You exchange take-out orders for home-cooked meals.
- You finally put your health first.

For many of us, January is a hopeful—even inspiring—time. Two weeks pass and your resolutions are going exactly as you hoped. You're rocking a ketogenic lifestyle, and you've never felt better. Two more weeks pass and February rears its ugly head. Suddenly, your stone-cold resolve starts to falter. You slip-up. Once. Then twice.

You feel guilty, but you push on. It's only March, after all. Maybe you can still salvage your goals. But by April, you're sliding again. Fast forward to December and you're more or less back where you started—or perhaps even further behind.

Why is it so hard to keep resolutions? Is it that you don't have the willpower? Is it laziness? Are you simply destined to fail, year after year?

Chances are it isn't you, but your resolutions.

## **Keto Goal-Setting 101**

According to psychologists, there are a few big problems when it comes to how we make long-term goals.

One of the most significant is something that researchers call “false hope syndrome.” In a nutshell, false hope syndrome is what happens when you make a positive goal that doesn’t line up with what you really believe about yourself—either consciously or subconsciously.

Let’s take a look at an example. Say you’ve read up on ketosis. You understand all the health benefits of ketones, and you’ve even dabbled with the diet. But each time, you last two weeks, give or take a few days. Maybe you’ve even experienced some benefits—weight loss, increased energy, decreased appetite, etc. You just can’t seem to stick to it. Something always gets in the way. It could be a dinner party, a work lunch, or a special occasion. Maybe you’re too busy to cook for yourself, or you have no idea what to make.

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Whatever the excuse, the reality is that deep down, you probably don’t believe you can keep keto up over the long-term. Maybe you don’t believe you deserve wellness. You have to change your negative beliefs before you can translate your resolution into positive action.

Of course, there are other reasons behind why goals fail. Sometimes, it’s as simple as not having a solid plan. Other times, unrealistic expectations make it hard to maintain a goal in the long-term. Some people think that changing one aspect of their life will magically change other aspects of their life, too, and when that doesn’t happen they end up disappointed and discouraged. They revert back to their old habits.

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For example, someone who wants to shed twenty pounds might believe they'll be all-around happier, more successful at work, or better in bed if they just lose that weight. So they lose the weight, but the rest of their life remains more or less the same. With time, they decide keeping the weight off isn't worth it.

These unrealistic expectations can be traced back to stuff we see in magazines, on television, and in the movies. Unfortunately, real life is a lot more complicated than that. There are no quick fixes or magic solutions.

The bottom line? People think goals are about taking action, but they're actually about changing behavior. And in order to change behavior, you need to change your thinking. In other words, you need to rewire your brain.

With that in mind, here are our six tips for setting realistic keto resolutions in the New Year.

## **1. Focus on a single goal. Make sure it's realistic and specific**

Having a bunch of vague goals is a good way to fail miserably at all of them. It's better to choose one thing that you want to focus on this year. Make your goal **REALISTIC** and **SPECIFIC**.

For instance, let's say you eat out pretty much all the time and it's getting in the way of both your keto diet and your health. In 2017, your goal is to cook more. Is it realistic?

That depends on your definition of “more.” Is it specific? Not at all. Going from never (or rarely) cooking for yourself to cooking every day would be a set-up for failure.

A better goal would be to say you’ll try one new recipe per week—you can make a single meal go further by cooking a big batch and saving the leftovers—ideally on a designated night.

Don’t forget to set yourself a timeline so that you can monitor your progress. For example, you’re going to cook once a week for three months. After the three months are up—that’s 12 recipes in total—you’ll have a solid foundation of recipes to up your cooking game for the next three months.

## **2. Make a list of the negative beliefs standing in the way of you and your goal**

Pinpointing negative beliefs can be either extremely easy or extremely hard. For instance, in the example above, you might make the goal of cooking more knowing full well that you don’t like to cook. Write that down.

Then identify ways that you can make cooking more enjoyable—cook with a friend, listen to music or a podcast while you cook, or cook with a glass of wine, etc.

In other cases, negative beliefs are much more personal and painful. They may be related to subconscious or long-buried negative feelings from as far back as childhood.

Some common ones? Feeling inadequate, undesirable, and undeserving of things like well-being, health, and happiness.

## **3. Create a detailed step-by-step plan to achieve your goal**

How will you manage temptation? How will you deal with setbacks?

Having a goal is more or less useless unless you have a clear plan as to how you'll achieve it. A lot of small steps are better than one or two big steps, which can end up being overwhelming to the brain.

In addition, you'll need to account for contingencies. What will you do when you find yourself faced with temptation? What will you do to get back on track if you slip-up? The more thorough, the better.

## 4. Find an accountability buddy

Social pressure can go a long way when it comes to helping people change their habits. Having an accountability buddy makes it more difficult to abandon your goal when the going gets tough.

But make sure it's someone, ideally a friend or family member, that you trust. Take the time to explain why you want to achieve your goal. Schedule weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly meetings or discussions to discuss your progress—if your partner has a goal, you can act as accountability buddies for each other.

Be honest when you slip-up, and describe what you'll do to get back on track. And remember to offer encouragement to each other.

## 5. Go easy on yourself and celebrate milestones towards success

The less seriously you take yourself, the easier it will be to bounce back after failure. Remember, the keto path is about achieving wellness in the long-term. You're bound to slip up every once in a while. Dust yourself off and try again.

And remember, good behavior should be celebrated. Don't wait to achieve your long-term goal to celebrate your success.