

Your shout

WEB

You've been giving your views online over how much of a viable option giving up alcohol could be, in terms of improving our general health. Could you live without alcohol?

Yes I already do. I haven't had an alcoholic drink for 19 years.

Louise Smith Darren Garner

Absolutely. The only thing alcohol does is make the brewers rich.

Ann Worthington

Obviously, we could all live without alcohol. Same as we could live without chocolate, fashion clothes and expensive holidays. But why would you? Not everyone drinks enough to develop extreme medical issues, in fact most people don't.



Fiona Brett

Have done for 19 years, best move ever.

Pete Bell

I used to be a binge drinker until I fell over twice in one night cutting my head open. It scared my guy so much, it scared me more, so now I don't do it. But I get to spend all that beer money in Hobbycraft so every cloud... Lol.

Tracy Christmas

Yep, no problem.

Amanda Jayne Billington

Thirteen days into a "dry January". No I can't, and I don't want to.

Dean Badder

Twenty-three years gone and not a sip...many more years to come without alcohol for me.

Sameer Shanaz

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Be realistic in New Year's resolutions



Two weeks into January, are your resolutions intact? **Dr Mark Griffiths**, of Nottingham Trent University, has some tips

Hands up. How many of you reading this have already broken your New Year's resolutions? You're not alone. Research has shown that fewer than 10 per cent of us manage to keep our resolutions after a few months.

The main reason we don't stick to them is that we set too many or they're unrealistic to achieve. For some people, it takes something radical for them to change their ways. It took a medical diagnosis to make me give up alcohol and caffeine. But there are tried and tested ways that can help you stick to your resolutions:

■ **Be realistic.** You need to begin by making resolutions that you can keep and that are practical. If you want to reduce your alcohol intake because you tend to drink

alcohol every day, don't immediately go teetotal. Try to cut out alcohol every other day, or have a drink once every three days.

■ **Do one thing at a time.** One of the easiest routes to failure is to have too many resolutions. If you want to be fitter and healthier, do just one thing at a time. Give up drinking. Give up smoking. Join a gym. Eat more healthily. But don't do them all at once. Chose just one and do your best to stick to it. Once one resolution is under control, begin a second one.

■ **Tell someone your resolution.** Letting family and friends know that you have a resolution can act as a safety barrier and a face-saver. If you really want to cut down smoking or drinking, real friends will not put temptation in your way.



Starting at the gym is a good idea but don't do it at the same time as other major lifestyle changes.

■ **Change your behaviour with others.** Trying to change habitual behaviour on your own can be difficult. For instance, if you and your partner both smoke, drink and/or eat unhealthily, it is really hard for one to change their behaviour if the other is still engaged in the same bad

habit. By having the same resolution, the chances of success improve.

■ **Realise that behavioural change isn't limited to the New Year.** Changing your behaviour (or some aspect of it) doesn't have to be restricted to the start of the

new year. It can be anytime. ■ **Accept lapses as part of the process.** It's inevitable when we're trying to give up something, there will be lapses. You shouldn't feel guilty, but accept it is part of the learning process in enabling behavioural change.

Bite-size resolutions easier to keep



Businesswoman **Misia Smith**, of West Bridgford, says small steps are the key to keeping resolutions

The last moment of the last day in December, we "commit" ourselves to making a fresh start. We'll get fit, eat healthier, drink less, take up a new hobby or choose some training to further our personal or professional development.

But sadly, even with the best of intentions, only around one in 10 of us actually keeps our resolutions. I'm guilty of it myself. Start the new year ablaze and, bit by bit, lose motivation, or sabotage myself with that slice of freshly baked bread dripping in butter. Once I've done that I've blown it. I make lots of excuses like, "Oh well, I've eaten some now; I've 'broken' my resolution, so I

may as well enjoy a slice of toast when I like and to hell with the consequences!"

Over the years, I suppose as I've got older and wiser, I have found that two methods of keeping resolutions work best for me. Breaking my goals down into bite-size pieces; and public committal.

For example, instead of promising to never eat bread again, I'll stick to allowing myself one sabotage a month. Eventually, I'll hopefully not bother with the bread altogether.

This year, I want to improve my fitness. I hate the gym and I'm unfit and quite frankly freaking out about the sudden disappearance of my waistline and shrinkage of all my clothes. So, I know me; I can't just decide to go to the



Could bread and butter scupper your new year resolution?

gym because I'll get bored. I have to go a step further than that and commit publicly. So I've signed up to Race for Life and shared my fundraising page on Facebook. This way, I am not allowed to fail.

Expect to revert to your old habits from time to time. Treat any failure as a temporary setback rather than a reason to give up altogether. After all, you are

adjusting to new habits.

And give yourself a break. I certainly don't expect to be running 5km or 10km straight away. I'll be setting myself a goal of half a kilometre a week and before I know it, I'll be surpassing all my expectations.

I think it's important to have a good think about what you'd like to change in your life. Decide on a way you'd

like to do it and jot yourself down a little plan with a weekly or monthly target.

But I don't think you have to wait until the new year to make a resolution. It's an unnecessary expectation. I'm sure many of us make resolutions regularly without realising it. Whatever you decide to do and however you decide to do it, good luck.

Do you agree with our guest columnists? Have your say at nottinghampost.com or e-mail opinion@nottinghampost.com