

BEYOND NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



by B. Kay Sugg

After all the parties, family gatherings, traveling, and celebrations during the holidays, come January many of us may experience guilt— about overeating, less than positive interactions with a friend or family member, or tasks left undone at home or at work.

Perhaps we make New Year's resolutions knowing we are not going to keep them, and all of this can lead to let down. Add to that the depression (seasonal affective disorder) some people (about 10 million) may already be experiencing from the change in seasons and less sunlight.

Resolutions to maintain our mental well-being should be just as important as resolutions to lose weight, exercise more, save money, quit smoking, etc. One of the best ways to fight depression and elevate your mood is to stimulate the body to release endorphins, the "feel-good" hormones. Endorphins affect the body the way that codeine or morphine does, but without the addiction.

Check out the tips below, which will help you to start the New Year in a positive state of mind. Happy New Year!



EXERCISE

Even moderate-intensity exercise (brisk walking, dancing, biking, etc.) produces endorphins in the body and promotes a feeling of euphoria.

TUNE IN

Listen to music you really love; it gives you the same feeling you get when endorphins are released.



ORGANIZE

Create a schedule of tasks you need to do. Feeling that you have too much to do in too little time can create stress and make you feel overwhelmed. Making a list or schedule will help you to focus on one task at a time.



DE-CLUTTER

Get rid of clutter. Your psychological comfort is affected; clutter can cause stress and anxiety.



EAT DARK CHOCOLATE

It enhances concentration and focus and boosts endorphin production in the body.



LAUGH MORE

Laugh a lot. Many studies have been done on the healing effects of laughter.



GET OUTSIDE

Get out in the sunlight each day; it helps produce serotonin and relieves seasonal affective disorder.



THINK POSITIVE

Repeat self-affirmation statements each morning. Research shows that 80% of our thoughts are negative. By repeating affirmative statements like "I can complete my work easily," we can rewire our thinking.



MORNING MOTIVATOR SMOOTHIE

Start your morning off with the fresh flavor of fruits and vegetables, while piling on the nutrients!

HEALTH BENEFITS

- **Daily dose of fruits and vegetables.** With busy schedules, it's often difficult for people to eat enough fresh produce. By blending them into smoothies, it's easier to eat a larger quantity.
- **Vitamins and Minerals.** Dark, leafy greens, like spinach are full of healthy vitamins and nutrients, including calcium and vitamin K. Both of those support calcium absorption to keep bones healthy. Vitamins A and C, which help lower cholesterol, may decrease your risk of heart attacks and strokes.
- **Increased fiber intake.** Consuming whole fruits and vegetables helps to increase your fiber intake, which helps with digestion.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add in base ingredients and add-ins of choice to a blender. Almond or coconut milk, Greek yogurt and hemp seeds are go-to ingredients for any smoothie but you can add in additional natural sweeteners or swap out bananas for applesauce.
2. In addition to your base ingredients, then add the spinach, green apple and banana to the blender.
3. Blend ingredients on high until a smooth consistency develops. Add more milk as desired if you'd like a thinner smoothie. Serve immediately or enjoy up to 3 days after making your smoothie.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup baby spinach
- 1/2 green apple, chopped
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup dairy, almond, rice, soy or coconut milk
- 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt (optional)

OPTIONAL ADD-INS

- 1 tbsp flax, hemp or chia seeds
- 2 tbsp protein powder of choice
- 1 tbsp sweetener of choice (honey, stevia, agave syrup, dates)
- 1/2 cup applesauce (use in place of banana)



Source: <https://thegirlonbloor.com/the-best-healthy-smoothies/>