



Staying in Touch®

Happy New Year!

As you start your journey into another year, here's a question to ask yourself: *What's the underlying reason for setting new goals for the coming months?*

At first glance, you might decide it's something like "to improve my life" or "to get better organized." These are good reasons, but more importantly, your greatest benefit for goal setting is to focus your attention on the areas of life that you can determine and control.

For instance, you may not be able to choose *when* you eat lunch, but you can decide *what* you eat. Your goals should reflect what you can control in your life. Ultimately, you decide the direction your life is taking, and goals are the means of seeing what you are controlling, and how well.

The more you can call the shots in your life, the happier you tend to be—assuming you align your goals with personal, life-affirming choices.

Another thought: This year, plan now on reviewing your goals on a weekly basis. This allows you to adjust your goals and keep you moving in a positive direction.

Enjoy this issue; see you soon for your next massage!

Start Your New Year Off Right!

You likely know by now that massage is one of the best overall ways to support your body's health. Nothing else combines that relaxing sense of well-being with the long list of health benefits that regular massage offers you. Whether it's handling stress, tense muscles, or just helping your body to function better overall, nothing beats a massage!



You can further improve your health through the choices you make every day.

To give you a little inspiration in that direction, the rest of this issue shares some interesting insights into creating a happier, healthier you. Whatever steps you take to improve your overall health, you can count on your regular massage sessions to help your body

function at its best. See you soon!

Time to eat ... There's a time to eat and a time to sleep; eating while you should be sleeping "might be doing double damage" to your waistline, *Scientific American* reports. The problem lies within our natural circadian rhythm, the body's 24-hour "clock," which keeps our sleep cycle in sync with day and night but also regulates when and how quickly we metabolize food. A new study suggests that crossing those wires—simply by eating at the wrong time of day—may contribute to weight gain. The researchers were inspired by the observation that shift workers whose schedules force them to eat at times when they'd normally be sleeping tend to be overweight. So they mimicked the behavior with mice: One group ate at night and slept by day, and a second group slept at night and ate during the day. After several weeks, the mice in the first group had gained 20 percent more weight than the others. The results suggest that weight gain may depend as much on when you eat as what you eat, says Northwestern biologist Fred Turek. "Better timing of meals, which would require a change in behavior, could be a critical element in slowing the ever-increasing incidence of obesity." —*The Week* Vol. 9, Iss. 431

Programming yourself to be fat ... Eating lots of cheeseburgers, fries, and sugary snacks makes people gain weight—but not, new research shows, just because these foods are so high in calories. A high-fat, high-sugar diet, say Washington University scientists, changes the balance of bacteria in the gut, and effectively "programs" people's digestive systems to make them fat. The human intestinal tract has two main types of bacteria that help us digest food: Firmicutes and Bacteroidetes. Research has shown that people—and mice—with a high percentage of Firmicutes in their intestines tend to be fat, because these bacteria are very efficient at converting food into calories that the body then absorbs. Those with a preponderance of the less-efficient Bacteroidetes remain relatively lean. Researchers found that when they transferred intestinal bacteria from obese mice into the guts of previously microbe-free mice, the mice rapidly gained weight. When both types of bacteria were inserted into skinny mice, they stayed lean—until they began eating a diet high in fat and sugars. Then the count of "lean" bacteria dwindled, while the "fat" bacteria proliferated and took over the gut. As a result, the once-skinny mice bulked up. The results, researcher Jeffrey Gordon tells the *Los Angeles Times*, suggest that our resident microbes play a major role in determining whether we're lean or fat; further research may provide new treatments for obesity.

—*The Week* Vol. 9, Iss. 441

Long live optimism ...

If you look on the bright side, you're more likely to live longer than pessimists, a new study says. University of Pittsburgh researcher Hilary Tindle surveyed nearly 100,000 women, ages 50 to 79, about their outlook on life, then tracked their health for several years. Women who answered yes when asked such questions as, "In unclear times, I usually expect the best" were categorized as optimists; pessimists were those who affirmatively answered questions such as, "If something can go wrong for me, it will." All were healthy at the start of the study. After eight years, the most optimistic women were 9 percent less likely to develop heart disease, 30 percent less likely to have died of heart disease, and 14 percent less likely to have died of any cause. Women who scored high in "cynical hostility" were at even greater risk of dying in general. "When you look at all of the risks, pessimists had everything in the wrong direction," Tindle tells CNN.com. "The question is, can we take these ingrained attitudes and teach that individual to modify them?" —*The Week Vol. 9, Iss. 427*

Massage Calms ADHD Kids

Two recent studies conducted by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami reported that regular massage therapy can be an effective treatment for kids with ADHD. One study found adolescent boys who received ten 15-minute daily massages were observed by their teachers to be more focused in their schoolwork, and they fidgeted less. In addition, the children rated themselves as happier than those who participated in a relaxation therapy program.

Another study involved kids aged 7-18, 20 percent of whom were girls. Each subject received a 20-minute massage twice a week. They showed immediate improvement in their moods and longer-term behavioral improvement in the classroom. They also reported feeling happier and their teachers found them to be more attentive.

In adult studies, massage has been shown to reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol, helping to mitigate the active fight-or-flight response. Massage also helps improve math computation performance and raises alertness levels, as measured on electroencephalograms (EEGs). Finally, massage decreases depression and increases mental focus. The same effects are seen in children and teenagers with ADHD.

Source: *ADHD Homeschool.info*

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Energy and persistence conquer all things. —Benjamin Franklin

**Finding a way to live the simple life today is a man's most
complicated task. —Henry A. Courtney**

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