Be a **Goal Digger** This Year.

As we enter the New Year, we are presented with a metaphorical ‘clean slate’ ahead of us. This is the perfect time to set goals for ourselves and start 2018 on the right foot. Whether it is a new goal or one that you are currently working towards, it is best to approach it using the SMART method. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This method of goal-setting helps vague ideas become your reality.

**SPECIFIC:** The goal should be easy to understand, with no room for misinterpretation. It must state specifically what you want to accomplish.

*Good example:* Do 10 push-ups from the ground.  
*Bad example:* Get stronger.

**MEASURABLE:** Goals must be measureable to determine whether or not you have met them. Setting a measurable goal also allows you to track your progress over time. Measurable outcomes can be objective and/or subjective, meaning that you could track weight loss using a scale or by monitoring how your clothing fits.

**ATTAINABLE:** Another word for this would be ‘achievable’. The goal should be challenging, yet not so far out of reach. Goals that are out of reach, or too difficult become frustrating and the disappointment of not meeting the goal can lead to feelings of failure.

**RELEVANT:** Is this goal important to you? Goals that align with your wants, needs and interests are more appropriate than those which do not. Therefore, your motivation to meet these goals will be stronger.

**TIME-BOUND:** To keep you on track and focused, when setting a goal, both short-term and long-term deadlines should be used.

*Good example:* In January, I will take 12 group fitness classes; three times per week, for 45-60 minutes per session.  
*Bad example:* I will take more group fitness classes.

Tackle 2018 by setting **SMART** goals. Create clear, meaningful and achievable goals, and meet them with pride.

Reference:  
Holiday Temptations

The average holiday dinner, including appetizers, adds up to about 4,500 calories,\(^1\) more than double the recommended amount for the average American! Furthermore, most people attend multiple holiday events, leading to unwanted weight gain – typically 1.8 pounds for adults.\(^2\) Holiday weight gain can be controlled by using healthy cooking methods, swapping ingredients, and attending events with a plan!

With a wide variety of cooking methods from which to choose, making the right selection can be daunting. When thinking about limiting unhealthy fat and cancer-causing chemicals, using an appropriate cooking method can be key. Boiling and steaming are the best ways to cook vegetables, as there is no need for added fat or sugar to preserve their flavor. Steaming is preferable to boiling as it preserves all the nutrients which can leak out during the boiling process. This is often indicated by loss of color in vegetables or water that is no longer clear. Fish, eggs, and fruit cook nicely when poached in a small amount of water, just under boiling temperature. Broiling, roasting, and grilling are excellent ways to cook meat, however, some precautions are necessary when grilling. To reduce exposure to carcinogens, remember to trim the fat from the meat, marinate it for at least thirty minutes before grilling, and avoid using charcoal whenever possible. Frying should be avoided, as it increases the saturated fat content and in some cases the trans fats in foods.

Swapping ingredients is an easy way to decrease the amount of sugar, fat, and overall calories in a recipe. Here are some great swaps that you can try when baking:

- Heavy cream for coconut milk - cup for cup
- Chocolate chips for cocoa beans - equal portions
- Oils in bread, muffins, cakes for unsweetened apple sauce - cup for cup (may vary slightly)
- Butter for unsweetened applesauce - 50% butter and 50% applesauce
- White flour for wheat/nut flour - ¼ cup wheat for 1 cup white/use recipe that calls for nut flour
- Butter for heart-healthy oil-based buttery spread - equal portions
- Whole milk for reduced fat milk - cup for cup
- White sugar for vanilla extract - 2 tbsp for every cup sugar

Planning before going to parties or events is a great way to keep your food consumption in check. Follow recommended portion sizes, avoid meal-skipping, rate your food, and practice ‘mindful eating.’ MyPlate is a good guide to controlling portion size. Find it at https://www.choosemyplate.gov. Avoid skipping meals prior to attending an event. Doing so may cause low blood sugar levels, missed nutrients, fatigue, and ravenous hunger leading to lack of self-control and substantial over-eating. Rating your foods on a scale of one to ten and eating only those which you rate at eight or higher is another effective tool. Studies have shown that keeping a food journal leads to greater success by making you stop before you indulge and think about portion control, keeping you accountable for your decisions. Consider keeping a food journal where you will note the times of meals, foods eaten, amount, and how it made you feel (emotionally and/or physically).\(^3\) Lastly, ‘mindful eating’ is a method used to increase your awareness of when you are truly hungry and eating for health and well-being. It involves limiting distractions at meal times, eating slowly, chewing well, and being aware of how food makes you feel. Try giving two of these tactics a try at your next event.

References: