

# New You, Now

You've made your list. You've checked it twice. Now let *Spirit* help you foolproof your personal makeover and start the new year right.

GET FIT		<p><b>Know This</b> Gyms wrangle 12 percent of memberships in January, the most popular month. But more than half of people who start an exercise program drop out in the first six months, according to a study by the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.</p> <p><b>Do This</b> Get a buddy. A 2009 study by the University of Oxford found that your body produces more feel-good endorphins when you work out with a friend or a group of friends as opposed to working out alone.</p>
QUIT SMOKING		<p><b>Know This</b> Quitting is inspirational. A recent study in the <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> found that people were 67 percent more likely to quit smoking if their spouses threw away <i>their</i> cartons first.</p> <p><b>Do This</b> Call a doctor. If smokers talk about quitting to a doctor for four to 30 minutes one or more times, "their quit rate increases 70 percent," says Stacey A. Kenfield, a researcher at the Harvard School of Public Health.</p>
SAVE UP		<p><b>Know This</b> People spend less when carrying big bills. In a 2009 study, researchers at the University of Maryland and New York University found that 63 percent of test subjects chose to buy candy when given four quarters, but only 26 percent went for the sweets with a single.</p> <p><b>Do This</b> "Stash \$5 on payday," says Kenneth F. Robinson, author of <i>Don't Make a Budget</i>. "Put it in an envelope in the kitchen. This leaves you \$5 short, so you 'feel broke' sooner and spend more carefully."</p>
EAT SMART		<p><b>Know This</b> Skipping breakfast could backfire. A 2009 study by the Imperial College in London shows that nixing the first meal of the day makes you crave high-calorie foods.</p> <p><b>Do This</b> Keep a food journal. Dieters who write down what they eat lose twice as much weight as those who don't, according to a 2008 study by Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, Oregon.</p>
MAKE TIME		<p><b>Know This</b> Sixty-five percent of Americans spend more time with their CPUs than their spouses, according to a 2007 study by Kelton Research, an independent research firm in New York City and Los Angeles. Your laptop can do a lot of things, but it can't kiss you goodnight.</p> <p><b>Do This</b> "Plan a family dinner," says DeAnne Flynn, author of <i>The Time-Starved Family</i>. "Having dinner together promotes communication, improves children's language skills, and fosters healthy eating habits."</p>