



Lighthouse Financial Solutions

Guiding You To A Brighter Future

Eric Hutter

Volume 4, Issue 1, January 2016

Inside This Issue:



Clearing Out Your Files for 20161

Making Your New Year's Resolution Stick2

Are You Getting Serious About Becoming More Healthy In 2016? You're Not Alone.2

Drink a Cup of Dark Hot Chocolate Daily for Winter Warmth and Health Benefits – Recipe Included3

January Health Care Checklist4

Social Security Changes Coming In 2016: Have You Verified Your Records?4

Clearing Out Your Files for 2016

A common situation in retirement is downsizing to smaller residences. If you did that in 2015, or are making plans for the near future, consider your paperwork.

How long to keep records? Keep your tax returns indefinitely.

Detailed records for your tax returns, including 1099-R forms reporting distributions and Copies of Form 5498 which details your annual contributions to an IRA returns can be shredded after seven years.

This also means if you buy an asset, you should keep the records until seven years after it is sold.



Keep a copy of your current IRA beneficiary form with you indefinitely with your other important estate documents. For as long as your account is active, also keep copies with your adviser, and with the custodian. Give a copy to the beneficiary as well.

Preferably, all estate planning items are kept in a fireproof safe or safe-deposit box.

Since scanners and digital cameras are so readily available, store digital copies indefinitely in your fireproof safe or safe deposit box.

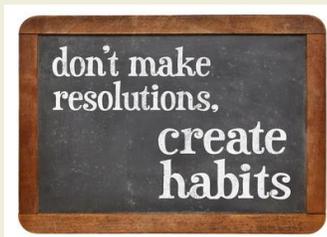
Source:
<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/year-end-tax-tip-what-files-to-keep-what-to-throw-away-2015-12-23>

Dec 23, 2015 - Robert Powell

Are You Getting Serious About Becoming More Healthy In 2016? You're Not Alone.

Making Your New Year's Resolution Stick

New Year, Fresh Start. We list our goals, chart our course, and hope that we can stick with it. If you have trouble following through with resolutions, maybe it's time to change your approach:



There's no single solution to creating a habit — for ourselves or the people around us, so one person's advice may not get you to your goal. When we shape our habits to suit our own nature, interests, and values, we set ourselves up for success.

Ask yourself, "When have I worked well in the past?" and try to remember your habits at the time. Then you can replicate them.

Do you work better ...

- with a team or solo?
- under deadlines or free?
- on several projects at once or one at a time?

Each step you take toward creating your new habit gets easier as you keep your own nature in mind.

http://gretchenrubin.com/happiness_project/2016/01/dont-fall-for-the-common-habits-myth-that-stops-people-from-making-successful-change/

Gretchen Rubin – January 2, 2016



If you have resolved to live a more healthy lifestyle, you are not alone. Americans are finally turning the corner when it comes to eating in a nutritious manner and getting exercise. A study published in November in Health Affairs found that Americans have improved their diets overall. The general trend seems to be an increase consumption of fresh vegetables to replace overly processed, deep fried foods, sugary drinks, and junk food.



The idea of daily exercise is also starting to catch hold. Increasing numbers of Americans are exercising an average of 30 minutes daily.

Smoking is also on the decline; the percentage of Americans who smoke cigarettes has dropped 20 percent over the last 10 years - a full percentage point last year.



Some estimates attribute the prevention of over a million premature deaths to these improvements. Americans who are in good shape as young adults are much less likely to die in middle age; they are also less likely to suffer from some of the chronic lifestyle illnesses like diabetes.

Improved health means lower health care costs. It means a more productive work day and a higher overall quality of life.

Whatever your reasons for getting a healthier lifestyle in 2016, you're in good company!

<http://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/2016-year-americans-get-serious-about-getting-healthy-n488731> (January 2, 2016) Carol, Linda

Drink a Cup of Dark Hot Chocolate Daily for Winter Warmth and Health Benefits

Recipe: Home Made Decadent & Delicious Dark Hot Chocolate

Thick creamy hot cocoa not only tastes better than those sugary packaged mixes, it's also good for you. Try this fast and easy 4 serving recipe one cold morning.



2 cups whole milk
1 cup Half and Half
5 ounces dark chocolate, chopped (about 1 cup)
2 tablespoons light-brown sugar

Optional Additions:

¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste
½ teaspoon ancho chile powder

Warm milk and cream in a medium saucepan over a medium-low heat. Add chocolate. Whisk until melted and combined. Add sugar, and whisk until dissolved. Continue to warm mixture until thick, about 5 minutes.

Whisk in one of the optional additions and strain into cups. Each serving contains 1.25 ounces of dark chocolate.

Dark Chocolate has gotten lots of press in recent years as a superfood, so reach for a cup of hot cocoa on chilly winter mornings.

1 ounce of dark chocolate a day reduces inflammation and floods your body with flavonoids and antioxidants that protect from free radicals linked to heart disease and certain cancers. It also contains serotonin, an anti-depressant that triggers the production of endorphins to make people happier.¹

Eating chocolate five minutes after a meal or 20 minutes prior reduces your appetite by as much as 50 percent. The key here is moderation. Consuming a small quantity of dark cocoa satiates the appetite and, since it prevents insulin spikes, keeps the body's fat-burning ability going strong.²

The tannins in cocoa contain oxalic acid, known to reduce acid production and plaque which can help prevent tooth decay. In addition, dark hot cocoa contains theobromine, known to harden enamel and help prevent discoloration.² Of course, chocolate lovers should still practice good daily dental hygiene.

Dark chocolate is loaded with flavonoids, which can improve blood flow, and in turn lowers blood pressure. Flavonoids can also increase the skin's hydration, protect from harmful UV light to improve your complexion. Increased blood flow throughout the body means an increase of oxygen to the brain, and some research suggests drinking cocoa may reduce the progress of dementia or even prevent it.³



Look for Dark Chocolate with 70% cacao or higher, and minimal added sugar.

Rich in potassium, copper, magnesium, iron and other important vitamins and minerals, dark chocolate can protect from anemia, type 2 diabetes and dangerous heart problems.^{1,3}

Sources:

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3708337/>
2. <https://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2003/11/cocoa-froths-cancer-preventing-compounds>
3. <http://www.lovelivehealth.com/10-wonderful-health-benefits-of-hot-chocolate/>

January
Health Care Checklist



Keep a list of your medications and health conditions so that it is readily available for doctor consultations and emergencies, and update it annually.

Smartphone users can use an app like [mymedicalapp](#), but should be sure to also have a printed version in at home.

Update your emergency contact list. If you and your loved ones become separated during an emergency or natural disaster, you want this list handy.

Schedule all of your necessary appointments and medical tests for the year: Eye doctor, dentist, primary care doctor, and any necessary specialists. Make sure you're your immunizations are up to date and take a record of them with you.

Evaluate your exercise routine. Exercise cures all sorts of ills, from mental to physical. Do you spend at least 30 minutes in daily exercise? If not, join a workout program or setup a group of active friends to maintain a healthy level of activity together. If you love dogs but do not own one, inquire about volunteering to walk the dogs in your local Humane Society.

Take inventory of your medicine cabinet and emergency first aid kit. Throw away anything that's expired. Stock up on things you use a lot but are low on.

Don't forget your pet! Schedule a yearly exam and make sure your pet and has all of its immunizations up to date.

Social Security Changes Coming In 2016: Have You Verified Your Records?

Changes to Social Security benefits including how they are claimed was changed by congress in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, increasing the importance that marriage and year of birth details are verified. ^{1,2}



Due to the low inflation rate, some adjustments will not happen in 2016: Social Security beneficiaries won't get bigger payments in 2016. Low inflation in 2015 failed to trigger cost-of-living adjustments. Tax Cap and Earnings Limits were also unchanged. Beneficiaries are also protected from Medicare premium increases in the coming year. ¹

Look for changes that are coming in 2016: Check your maximum possible benefit level as they may have gone down. The Social Security Administration is offering more online services – workers and retirees can already create a My Social Security account to view their records, manage payment details, and obtain

forms. The Social Security Administration Offices have also implemented longer office hours so if you prefer to visit Social Security in person, you will have an hour longer most weekdays.¹

Verify your Social Security Records and correct any errors. Earnings or personal data errors can happen; while there has been a steady reduction of the error rate from 5.42 percent in 2009 to 3.53 percent in 2013, the 2014 error rate rose slightly in some but not all programs.² A March 2015, estimate stated that 0.35% of the around 2.8 million new death reports added to Social Security records each year are erroneous - this small percentage comes to roughly 9800 Americans!³

Errors in earnings or personal data can affect your benefits. Check your records and make corrections to ensure you receive all your benefits.

1 - <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/planning-to-retire/2015/10/15/7-ways-social-security-will-change-in-2016>
Brandon, Emily 10/15/2015

2 - The Next Social Security Crisis - Why American women are bearing the brunt of the retirement crunch; Edwards, Haley Sweetland (2015, August 3).Time, Vol. 186 Issue 5, p48

3 - Getting the Living Off Social Security's Deceased List May Take Legislation; Clark, Charles S., Government Executive, 00172626, 3/17/2015