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*"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go.  
 They merely determine where you start."*

— Nido Qubein

## New Year's Ideas to Keep You on Track to Hit Your Goals

For many people, the fresh new year is the perfect time to set fresh new goals and start fresh new habits. Unfortunately, it may be less than 10% of people keep resolutions through the entire year. When you're feeling stuck, see if any of these ideas help you continue to reach for your goals throughout the year.

- Pick something you really want, not something you think you should want.
- Set realistic goals or you'll wear yourself out too soon to see any results. 15 minutes per day adds up to over 90 hours in a year. 1% improvement every week for a year is a 66% improvement. Small efforts add up to amazing results.
- Don't give up, just pick it back up. You didn't make any time to read today, so what? Missing today doesn't erase all the books you have read. Just pick it up again tomorrow like missing a day didn't matter – because it doesn't.
- Schedule it, but don't over-schedule it. Blocking off time in your calendar for family night is a great way to save time for it, just be careful not to book yourself so solid that there's no time for variety and unexpected changes.
- Take stock regularly, and don't ask, "What's wrong with me?" instead ask, "What's not working? What could I try differently?"
- Change what you measure. Instead of measuring results, try measuring action. For example, don't measure how much money you've saved, instead measure how many paydays you actively reviewed your budget and put some money into savings.
- Track your wins and remind yourself of them often. Look back at how far you've come.
- Make it easier. Would it be easier to lay out your clothes the day before or use a meal prep service? What is making this hard? What can you do to make it easier?
- Make it more fun. Turn up the tunes, light your favorite candle, and wear the snazziest outfit. You could watch your favorite new series on the treadmill or sign up for a dance class instead. Practicing public speaking? Try an improv class instead of rehearsing speeches in the mirror.
- Tie new or changed habits to another activity or event. If you're used to picking up your phone every time you sit down, try setting the phone down away from your chair and instead keeping a book, fidget toy, or puzzle next to the chair.
- Take a friend. Try calling a friend and chatting on the phone while you both make a healthy dinner, sign up for a class together, or meet for a walk at lunch.
- Create a routine. It takes some dedication to establish new routines, but over time they become second nature, making your good behavior easier to maintain.
- There's an app for that. Digital notifications, reminders, and tracking can help you keep up with your new goals – from drinking more water to finance to volunteer time.
- Reward yourself. If you struggle with resistance or procrastination, it's okay to bribe yourself with a fancy coffee, a walk at your favorite park, or that new sweater you've been eyeing.
- Make rest a priority. Everything you do will be better and easier if you're getting enough sleep.



## Ingredients

- 8 ounces whole-wheat rotini
- 1 (5 ounce) package baby spinach, roughly chopped
- 4 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese, cut into chunks
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup reduced-fat milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese, more for garnish, if desired
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 (14 ounce) can artichoke hearts, rinsed, squeezed dry and chopped

## Directions

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain.
2. Combine spinach and 1 tablespoon water in a large saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until just wilted, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl.
3. Add cream cheese and milk to the pan; whisk until the cream cheese is melted.
4. Add Parmesan, garlic powder and pepper; cook, whisking until thickened and bubbling.
5. Drain as much liquid as possible from the spinach. Stir the drained spinach into the sauce, along with artichokes and the pasta. Cook until warmed through.

## Tips to extend the life of your carpet

[thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com) | [homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com) | [familyhandyman.com](http://familyhandyman.com)

Carpeting is such an important part of your home's interior, improving air quality, reducing noise, and providing warmth and comfort underfoot. You'll want to take proper care to extend the life of your carpet and keep it looking and performing its best. Below we've listed some tips to keep your carpet in its best condition.

### Vacuum regularly

Vacuum carpeting at least once per week, more if you have pets or children, to keep dust and soil from setting into the carpet fibers. You can use a rubber squeegee to help collect pet hair, and vacuum high-traffic areas a couple of times.

### Treat spills immediately

The sooner you clean and treat a stain, the more likely you can remove it. Blot and soak up wet spills (don't scrub) and use the edge of a dull knife or spatula to lift away solids like mud or food. If it makes sense, use a shop vacuum to suck up the mess without working it further into the carpet.

After pulling as much of the spill out of the carpet as possible, treat the area. Depending on the type of stain, you might use water, club soda, or a commercially available cleaner. (Always test products in a hidden place to make sure they won't damage your carpet.) Again, blot, don't scrub. It may take repeated treatments, so be patient. Avoid walking on the area until it has dried completely.

### Deep Clean

Depending on the traffic in your home, you'll want to deep clean your carpet every six to eighteen months. You can do it yourself or hire professionals – it costs less to do it yourself, but professionals have access to more effective equipment and cleaners, as well as specialized knowledge and training. As always, follow the carpet manufacturer's instructions.

After the carpet has been deep cleaned, avoid all traffic until it is completely dry. Once it's dry, vacuum to catch any loosened soil or fibers before moving the furniture back in.

### Bonus prevention tips

- Reduce the dirt and wear and tear on your carpeting by placing doormats outside and inside all entrance doors to trap soil or remove shoes at the door to avoid tracking in dirt.
- Change HVAC filters to trap dust before it lands on the carpet.
- Brush and bathe pets regularly.
- Keep your vacuum in good working order so it will maintain suction and clean your carpeting well.

With these tips, you'll keep your carpet looking and performing its best for years to come.