



# #FOODGOALZ

BROAD “BE MORE HEALTHY” RESOLUTIONS SET YOU UP FOR FAILURE. SWAP THEM OUT FOR A GOAL THAT’S SPECIFIC AND ACHIEVABLE, AND REAP THE RUNNING REWARDS ALL YEAR LONG.

BY CINDY KUZMA

▶ **IT’S THE TIME OF YEAR** when big, sweeping resolutions loom large: lose weight, eat “clean,” curtail the booze. While those are all worthy ambitions, your odds of achieving them skyrocket if you shoot for one or two small, specific food-related objectives that support the loftier nutrition goals, says Anne Mauney, R.D., mara-

thoner and coauthor of *Nutrition for Runners*.

Here are five goals that do just that. How to choose? Pick one (or two!) that fits your lifestyle and that you know you’re likely to achieve. “That way you’re setting yourself up for success by creating a positive feedback cycle,” says trail runner Maria Dalzot, R.D.

## Clean Up Your e-Feed

FOMO isn’t just for parties. While Instagram can offer inspiration and recipe ideas, scroll too long and you might find yourself weighed down in comparisons and unrealistic expectations, thanks to impossibly perfect meals and their ripped, lean creators. (We’re betting most of those don’t say #NoFilter.)

A 2016 study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* found the more time spent on social media, the greater the risk of eating and body-image concerns.

Consider each health- and fitness-related personality or influencer you follow, Dalzot advises. If their posts leave you feeling unworthy and sad rather than joyful and motivated, tap “unfollow.”

## Be Real About Carbs

Carbohydrates are the go-to fuel source for endurance exercise like running. But even marathoners don’t need to gorge on giant plates of pasta nightly, says Anne Rollins, R.D., a sports dietitian for the Core Diet. Instead, make sure each meal contains all three macronutrients: protein, carbs, and fats. You don’t have to count grams or calories—just use your plate as a guide, says ultrarunner Stephanie Howe Violett, Ph.D.

On most days, fill about half with colorful fruits and veggies, and one-quarter each with lean protein

(chicken, fish, or legumes) and whole grains like brown rice or quinoa. Add a teaspoon to tablespoon of healthy fats found in avocado, oils, and nuts for flavor, nutrient absorption, and crucial bodily functions.

If you’re trying to lose weight, go a little lighter on grains on your easy days. When you have a hard workout, long run, or race, bump up the carbs to as much as half the plate.

## Boost Breakfast

Literally running out the door on coffee alone? Rethink that. Overnight, your body depletes the stores of glycogen in your liver, leaving your muscles starving for energy. Early-morning runners who fuel up first—even on something as simple as a banana, or toast and jam—usually feel and perform better, Violett says.

Postrun, chow down on a meal that contains carbohydrates as well as protein and fat to stabilize blood sugar, improve recovery, and reduce cravings all day long. A smoothie with yogurt or protein powder, chia seeds, and fruit; oatmeal with milk

and nut butter; or avocado toast with a fried egg and wilted spinach (zap fresh leaves in the microwave for 45 seconds) all fit the bill, Mauney says.

If you’ve always skipped breakfast, start small and expect it to feel a little gross at first, Rollins says. Your body has been trained to not produce digestive enzymes early in the morning. After a few weeks, your body will get the hint and ramp up your appetite, allowing you to tolerate more fuel.

## Nail Long-Run Nutrition

Mastering midrun energy needs pays dividends long after you’ve kicked off your shoes, Violett says. Getting fuel the moment you need it gives you a jump-start on the recovery process, warding off the #runger that makes you eat everything in sight and sometimes causes weight gain.

For runs that are 60 minutes or longer, you want to aim for 30 to 60 grams of carbs per hour. If you’ve never eaten on your long runs before, start small and see what your stomach can

tolerate. Experiment with different bars, chews, and gels, and yes, real foods like bananas, raisins, and dates.

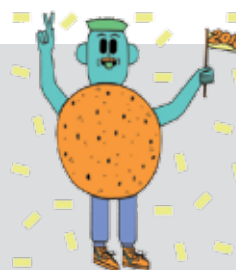
For those with sensitive stomachs, you’ll achieve the best digestive success if you start fueling earlier and in smaller doses, spreading out a gel or a pack of raisins over three or four miles, Mauney says. Wash it all down with water since food requires a little fluid to help with digestion.

## Make Meal Plans

Look at your calendar each week and identify potential challenges to healthy food choices—your kids’ soccer practices, a late-night meeting, or the night before a super-early run. Then find time slots when you have time for meal prep (say, chopping veggies, boiling eggs, or cooking an extra batch of brown rice).

Match them up, and you can avoid disaster, or at least an impulsive trip to the drive-through. “This planning takes a little more time upfront, but later on, when you’re hangry or tired, you’ll be thankful you did it,” Dalzot says. 🍌

## MAKE IT A NO-CLEANSE NEW YEAR



One resolution to skip: juice cleanses. You might drop a few pounds spending a week or two on an all-juice diet, but some of that comes from muscle, not all fat, says marathoner and Ironman Susan Kitchen, R.D. And entering near-starvation slows your metabolism so you store more fat when you resume eating normally. What’s more? Extremely low-calorie diets can also hurt performance and affect your immune system, says Rollins.