

HopeSource's Healthy Investments: New year a good time to start fresh



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When I started writing this column, I took it upon myself to be my own model student. I set careful budgets and kept a meticulously itemized list of my spending. A few weeks ago, despite my model behavior, I found myself squinting at my credit card balance, slightly baffled as to where all of my money went. While I'm still prone to spacing on my finances, I've adopted one foolproof habit that saves me from getting that cartoonish look on my face at the end of the month.

Every day, after I check my email, I log onto my online bank accounts and take what LearnVest CEO Alexa Von Tobel calls the Money Minute. A money minute is a time to get a quick snapshot of your finances on a daily basis. I personally take my money minute to review my LearnVest account, a free online financial planning tool, but this habit applies to everything from complex budgeting websites to simple receipts. During this time, I review my recent transactions line by line, and track the spending against my budget.

A daily check-up gives me a sense of control, and most importantly, peace of mind. If you're afraid of what monster might be lurking under your financial bed, that's

all the more reason to turn on the light and take a look.

Healthy choices

According to the University of Scranton Journal of Clinical Psychology, 38 percent of resolutions this New Year's were weight-related. Even though it isn't contagious, the Centers for Disease Control now describes American obesity as an epidemic. Losing weight is a great idea.

Losing weight is the No. 1 resolution of 2014, yet if past years are any indicator, only 8 percent of those resolutions will succeed. A lot of people adopt a diet when trying to lose weight.

Going paleo? Skip the dairy, bread and processed food. Going vegan? Stay away from animal products. Trying Atkins? Stay away from empty carbohydrates.

One of my friends is a Baptist preacher in Texas. When asked if he thought he should improve his health he responded, "The rivers of heaven flow with Coca-Cola! Why should I give it up?" Of course he was teasing, but he illustrates an important point. Most of us think of improving our health only in terms of what we stand to lose.

There are plenty of people eager to tell us the foods we should not eat. What do we need more of though? The Journal of Clinical Nutrition concluded in 2012 that less than 3 percent of Americans were getting enough fiber and only 2 percent were getting enough potassium in their diets. So to kick off 2014, even if you are like that

Baptist preacher and you need a Coke every now and then, strive to get your daily recommended intake of fiber and potassium. For an average adult, that is 4.7 grams of potassium and 28 grams of fiber.

Most people know that bananas have potassium, but potatoes, spinach, and tomatoes have far more potassium per serving. A serving of the recipe above has over 32 percent of the daily recommended intake of fiber and potassium.

HopeSource is a private, nonprofit organization that has provided a range of human services in Kittitas County since 1966. Learn more at www.hopesource.us.

Spiced potatoes and spinach

Ingredients:

- 6 Yukon gold potatoes, cubed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cups raw spinach
- 2 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- Half a yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt to taste

Boil the potatoes for 20 minutes. Pour olive oil into a skillet on medium heat and sauté the potatoes with everything but the spinach for 3 minutes. Add the spinach and cook for an additional two minutes. Serve and enjoy.