



## **Turning the Page to 2010: New Year's Resolutions**

\*\*\* Complete Tables for Poll Appended \*\*\*

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### **This Marist Poll Reports:**

#### **Wiping the Slate Clean ... New Year's Resolutions**

Nearly half of all Americans -- 48% -- say they are at least somewhat likely to make a New Year's resolution this year. 52%, on the other hand, report it is not very likely at all.

The proportion of residents nationally who plan to wipe the slate clean has grown since last year. When Marist last asked Americans about New Year's resolutions at this time in 2008, 40% said they were either somewhat likely or very likely to make a resolution.

There has been a change among men on this question. A majority of men -- 53% -- report they are at least somewhat likely to make a New Year's resolution. Last year, 37% of men said they were planning to alter their habits. Women are consistent. 44% of women currently say they are going to make a change in 2010. The same proportion -- 44% -- made that pledge last year.

Looking at age, younger Americans are more likely to change their lifestyle compared with their elders. 60% of residents under the age of 45 say they are somewhat or very likely to make a resolution. 40% of those 45 and older believe they will do the same. In Marist's 2008 poll about New Year's resolutions, 55% of Americans younger than 45 years of age reported they were likely to make a vow to change while 29% of their elder counterparts said they were going to make the same promise.

#### **Weight Loss Tops Scale of New Year's Resolutions**

Americans have health on their minds heading into 2010. The number-one New Year's resolution is weight loss. 19% of residents who are likely to make a resolution vow to shed those extra pounds next year, and 12% plan to stop smoking. 10% say they want to exercise more. Other leading lifestyle changes include being a better person (9%) and getting a better job (8%).

Although weight loss tops the list of resolutions for both men and women who are resolved to make a change in the New Year, more women than men plan to fight the battle of the

bulge. More than one-fifth of women -- 22% -- and 16% of men want to shed those extra pounds.

Older Americans reflect the top resolution of the overall population. About a quarter of residents age 45 or older who say they will likely make a resolution promise to lose weight. However, there is little agreement among their younger counterparts. 14% in this age group say they want to lose weight. 13% want to stop smoking, 12% resolve to get a better job, and 10% of these residents want to exercise more. 7% would like to be a better person.

### **Keeping Their Word?**

33% of Americans recall making a New Year's resolution last year, but how successful were they? Of those residents, 65% said they kept their promise for at least part of the year while 35% did not. Men were more steadfast than were women. 70% of men kept their resolution for at least part of 2009. This compares with 59% of women.

Dedication has grown among Americans who have previously made a resolution. While 65% of residents kept their resolution for 2009, 60% did so in 2008.

### **Optimism Among Americans Grows**

Looking ahead to the next decade, more than six in ten Americans have a positive outlook about the future. 63% say they are more optimistic heading into 2010 while 34% say they are more pessimistic. When Marist last asked this question in December 2008, 56% of residents had a positive outlook toward the future. 40%, however, had a more dismal view.

Although men and women maintain a similar outlook about the future, optimism among men has grown. Currently, 65% of women and 61% of men believe the future is a bright one. Last year, 62% of women and 50% of men thought that way.

Younger Americans are also more positive about the future compared with their elders. 72% of those under 45 years old are optimistic about 2010 compared with 57% of those 45 and older. A year ago, 64% of those under 45 and 52% of those who are older held a positive outlook for the year to come.

### **Nature of the Sample: 1034 U.S. Residents**

This survey of 1034 United States residents was conducted on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Residents 18 years of age and older were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. To increase coverage, this land-line sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell phone numbers. The two samples were then combined. Results are statistically significant at  $\pm 3.0\%$ . There are 498 residents likely to make a new year's resolution. The results for this subset are statistically significant at  $\pm 4.5\%$ . There are 325 residents who made a new year's resolution last year. The results for this subset are statistically significant at  $\pm 5.5\%$ . The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

# Marist Poll December 2009 National Survey Tables

		USA Residents	
		This year, are you very likely, somewhat likely, or not likely at all to make a New Year's resolution?	
		Very-Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
		Row %	Row %
USA Residents		48%	52%
Gender	Men	53%	47%
	Women	44%	56%
Age	Under 45	60%	40%
	45 or older	40%	60%

December 2009 Marist Poll National Residents "N=1034 MOE +/- 3%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Residents Likely to Make New Year's Resolution					
		What is it that you will resolve to do or not to do in the New Year?					
		Lose weight	Stop smoking	Exercise more	Be a better person	Get better job	Other
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Residents Likely to Make New Year's Resolution		19%	12%	10%	9%	8%	42%
Gender	Men	16%	13%	9%	10%	10%	42%
	Women	22%	11%	11%	8%	6%	42%
Age	Under 45	14%	13%	10%	7%	12%	44%
	45 or older	24%	12%	11%	10%	4%	40%

December 2009 Marist Poll National Residents Likely to Make A New Year's Resolution "N=498 MOE +/- 4.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Residents Likely to Make New Year's Resolution
		Col %
What is it that you will resolve to do or not to do in the New Year?	Lose weight	19%
	Stop smoking	12%
	Exercise more	10%
	Be a better person	9%
	Get better job	8%
	Improve health	6%
	Spend less money-Save more	6%
	Eat healthier	5%
	Go back to school	3%
	Kinder to others	3%
	Increase family time	1%
	Use time better	1%
	Stop drinking	1%
	Get closer to God	1%
	Worry less	1%
	Get new house	1%
	Set goals	<1%
Travel	<1%	
Other	13%	

December 2009 Marist Poll National Residents Likely to Make A New Year's Resolution "N=498 MOE +/- 4.5%"  
Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		USA Residents	
		Did you make a New Year's resolution last year?	
		Yes	No
		Row %	Row %
USA Residents		33%	67%
Gender	Men	35%	65%
	Women	32%	68%
Age	Under 45	42%	58%
	45 or older	27%	73%

**December 2009 Marist Poll National Residents "N=1034 MOE +/- 3%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.**

		Residents who Made a New Year's Resolution in 2009	
		Did you keep 2009 resolution?	
		Yes	No
		Row %	Row %
Residents who Made a New Year's Resolution in 2009		65%	35%
Gender	Men	70%	30%
	Women	59%	41%
Age	Under 45	65%	35%
	45 or older	64%	36%

**December 2009 Marist Poll National Residents who Made a New Year's Resolution in 2009 "N=325 MOE +/- 5.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.**

		USA Residents		
		Thinking about what is ahead for the world in 2010, are you generally more optimistic or more pessimistic?		
		More optimistic	More pessimistic	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
USA Residents		63%	34%	3%
Gender	Men	61%	37%	2%
	Women	65%	31%	4%
Age	Under 45	72%	27%	0%
	45 or older	57%	39%	4%
December 2009 Marist Poll National Residents "N=1034 MOE +/- 3%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.				