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# A new year, a new reason to get fit

## Motivation high – in the beginning

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THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

CHESAPEAKE — Michelle Burke was ready Monday to swim the first nine laps

of about 3,000 this year.

That's the plan, anyway.

Burke was among those starting the new year right at the Taylor Bend YMCA, a newly minted membership card in her hand.

The morning after New Year's Eve seems prime sleeping-in time, but there was a parade of sweat suits

through the doors of the YMCA off Taylor Road. The branch's membership director, Dolores Kirby, wasn't surprised.

"Every January, everybody comes in," Kirby said. "They have big goals, and they're highly motivated."

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**Michelle Burke made a New Year's resolution to take care of her health.**



STEPHEN M. KATZ/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Diana Dickerson of Portsmouth said she's used her YMCA membership about 10 times since she signed up about a year ago. She has resolved to start working out at the YMCA every day.

## Fit: Many don't stick with goal for new year to exercise regularly

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Maintaining that enthusiasm is the trick.

"We all have the big goals," said Annette Vialet of Suffolk, who was sleepwalking the paces of a fitness orientation on four hours' rest. "But do we stick to it?"

The numbers seem to say: not for long.

In December 2005, 140,000 members scanned their cards at YMCAs throughout South Hampton Roads. In January 2006, there were 230,000 scans. By April, the scans had dipped to 177,000.

Stepping gingerly on the treadmill Monday morning, Diana Dickerson said she's used her YMCA membership about 10 times since she signed up about a year ago.

"I told myself, starting today, I'm going to go every day," said Dickerson, who lives in Ports-

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mouth. She's going to supplement her workouts with the South Beach Diet, she said - a modified version: "I don't think I can go two weeks without sugar."

Fitness professionals said there's a difference in fitness resolutions nowadays. People are thinking more about getting fit vs. bulking up.

"In the '80s and '90s, it was this huge 'getting big' thing," said Kevin O'Dea, manager of The Gym Downtown in Norfolk, which - like many local gyms - was closed Monday. "Now, it's more weight loss and toning."

Tim Luken said he joined The Gym Downtown three weeks

ago to shed pounds and that winded feeling at the top of a flight of stairs.

"I don't want to be a muscle man," Luken said. "But I want to be in better control of my health, instead of it being in control of me."

"I guess New Year's is the time to do new things," said Luken, who switched on Jan. 1, 2006, from regular to diet sodas, a resolution he has kept. "Now it's time to take the next step."

Burke, ready to jump into the pool at Taylor Bend, has set a lofty goal for this year: Nine laps in nine minutes.

"Last year, I said, 'I'm not going to make a resolution, because I'm not going to follow up.' This year, I figured I've got to take care of my health."

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