Dec. 1st
Make a List and Check it Twice

He’s making a list and checking it twice, why not do the same? Santa does a great job of keeping tabs on who has been naughty and nice; imagine if we monitored our progress as diligently!

Self-monitoring is a great tool, and can be used to meet any goal you can think of! Self-monitoring is believed to have a reactive effect; when we compare our behaviors to a target standard, we tend to change those behaviors we’re focusing on to meet that measure. Self-monitoring may be used to increase activity, lose weight, manage blood sugars and blood pressure to name a few. What could you accomplish if you held yourself accountable?

But let’s not just focus on the left side of the list (naughty); it’s important to recognize your accomplishments too! Have you increased your water intake from 6 cups to 8? Write it down! Brought your fasting blood sugars down 10 points? That’s another score for the “nice team!” It may seem unnecessary, but when you’re feeling discouraged it’s nice to reflect on reminders of things you’ve achieved in the past week, month, or year.

Here are 7 steps to keep Santa honest by tracking your progress, too:

1. Identify a behavior you want to focus on and improve. Weight, blood sugar, taking your medication on time, etc. Hone in on a specific area.
2. Find a recording method that works for you. Some people like to journal, others don’t. Checklists, a phone app, or a rating scale using numbers or smiley faces on a calendar work also.
3. Decide when you are going to evaluate your progress. At the end of the day, week? Soon after you’ve hit that 10,000 step mark on your pedometer, for example? Be consistent with your monitoring.
4. Set a reminder if needed. Schedule an alarm on your phone, place a journal on your nightstand, or a put a sticky note on the bathroom mirror. New habits take some reminding to do!
5. Reward yourself. If you need some incentive to keep up with your tracking, reward yourself in a way that won’t set you back. Read: if I meet my weight-loss goal I will buy myself that new shirt I’ve been eyeing, not: if I meet my goal I can eat as much ice cream as I can stomach.
6. Have a friend check up on you. The list has gotta be checked twice, right? Involve a friend by requesting they ask you about your progress from time to time. You’re more likely to stay on track if you know someone else is holding you accountable!
7. Assess the need for continued monitoring. If you achieved your goal and it has become a habit, you may be able to stop the record keeping. But if it helps you stick to it, by all means continue! Or set a new goal.

Source: http://www.interventioncentral.org/self_management_self_monitoring