



29 Pinewood Forest Ct., Ste. 200
The Woodlands, Texas 77381

www.BAQ1.com

TOLL FREE 866-367-1177

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
BOISE, ID
PERMIT 411

Return Service Requested

1

Particles, Fibers, and Dust, Oh My!

2

Are New Year's Resolutions a Waste of Time?

Spotted Ceilings Are Tacky. Are They a Health Risk, Too?

3

Don't Let Typos Undermine Your Message

4

Unique Food Tracking Apps to Check Out in 2020

Your Diet's High-Tech Helper

UNIQUE FOOD TRACKING APPS TO CHECK OUT IN 2020

If you're the type to make New Year's resolutions, then there's a good chance health and fitness goals are among your targets for 2020. According to the New York Post, more than 55% of New Year's resolutions made by Americans in 2018 were health-related, covering topics like exercising more, losing weight, and eating more nutritious foods.

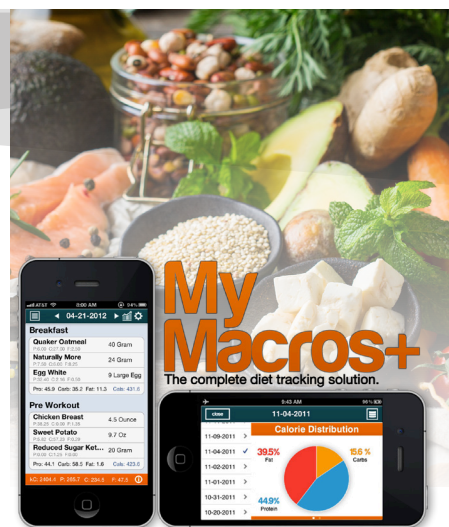
It's easy to set resolutions, but it's much harder to keep them. Luckily, we live in an age where high-tech tools are at our fingertips. Having a diet and exercise assistant in your pocket (literally) in the form of a smartphone app can do wonders for staying on track, and these days your options go far beyond one-size-fits-all calorie counters like MyFitnessPal. Here are two apps to check out if you're hoping to discover a new you this new year.

My Macros+

Developed by weightlifters, this app is tailor-made for people who have serious fitness goals and want to track their macronutrients (macros) — carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. With more than 1.5 million food items to choose from, a weight-tracking component, and more, My Macros+ covers all your bases. Reviewers rave about the app's flexible goal-setting feature, which allows for intermittent fasting, calorie/carbohydrate cycling, and meal plans that include 6–8 meals per day.

Ate

Ate bills itself as a "visual, mindful, and non-judgmental" food tracking app. Unlike most options on the market, Ate focuses on feelings rather than numbers. Instead of counting calories, its users snap photos of their meals and input *why* they ate — whether they were hungry, stressed, or socializing — and how the meal made



them feel. It's an ideal strategy for those worried that too much data could trigger an obsession or disordered eating.

Once you find a food tracking app you like, try pairing it with other tools that can help you meet your goals. Whether you need help shopping for healthier foods, making smart choices when eating out, or finding nutritious recipes with ingredients you have at home, there's an app for that. Just pull up your phone's app store and start searching!



281-448-1100 or TOLL FREE 866-367-1177

www.BAQ1.com

January 2020

Particles, Fibers, and Dust, Oh My!

DIAGNOSING AN UNHEALTHY BUILDING WITH AIRBORNE PARTICLE COUNTS

Airborne particles are an often-overlooked aspect of indoor air quality (IAQ). Even among my own peers, particles are rarely a top priority. In this area, I'm an outlier.

When I do indoor air quality surveys, not only do I look at the standard environmental indicators like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, temperature, and relative humidity, but I also collect airborne particle counts at that time. I'm finding more and more that the presence of particles in the air is causing upper respiratory irritation. Many times, the complaints being expressed by building occupants are related to elevated particles. In fact, a few recent cases I've worked on were solved because I collected airborne particle counts during my survey.

Something Blue

The first case was in a commercial high-rise building where people were suffering from coughing, sneezing, and itchy eyes. When we talked to the occupants, they mentioned seeing a lot of dust on their desks and cubicle workstations. I took a look and noticed that the dust we found was the same light blue color as the carpets we were walking on. That gave us a good indicator of where the dust was coming from.

Our first suspicion was that the custodians were kicking the dust up and not vacuuming it properly. The problem was that in this particular building, the contracted custodians used purple backpack vacuums with a HEPA air filter. That usually means the vacuums will be capturing particles down to .3 microns in diameter. We went to the custodial closet, took the vacuum

canister apart, and took a look at the three-stage filter.

Stage one was dirty; stage two was loaded with dust and dirt; and stage three, the HEPA filter, was also dirty! Basically, the vacuum cleaner was actually releasing more particles in the air that then settled as dust on the surfaces.

The Fix: We directed the building management to inform the custodians that they needed to clean their vacuum filters and get on a program to change their filters on a regular basis.

The Result: The complaints went away.

It's in the Walls

I was called to a federal building that has been struggling with a reoccurring leak for many years. The building would leak in one gentleman's office, the building owner would repair the leak, and for six months, everything would be fine until it leaked again. The building owner would find the new leak, repair that, and the cycle would continue.

When we arrived, the three acoustical ceiling tiles along the wall near the window were missing. The tiles had been removed 10 days before, and during that time, that gentleman started reporting upper respiratory problems. We ran particle counts in this man's office and found the airborne levels of PM10, which are larger-sized particles, were twice the allowed average set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Meanwhile, the smaller particles, PM2.5, were right at the limit allowed by the EPA. To make matters worse for this gentleman, the next day

he was scheduled for a doctor's appointment to have sinus work done.

The Fix: We recommended putting the man in another office in an unaffected area, fix the leak, replace the ceiling tiles, and do a hyper-clean of all ceilings, walls, and carpeting in the space to remove particles from the air until everything was fixed and clean.

The Result: Potential health problems will be avoided.

Trouble Overhead

Our last story involved a federal courthouse. We hadn't received any specific complaints from people, so we ran the same series of tests across the second floor. As we did, we found one specific set of four offices had high levels of airborne particles. We always go above the ceiling to see what was going on up there, and when we looked above the ceilings in these offices, we found a lot of insulation from the deck above had fallen onto the ceiling tiles.

The building engineer mentioned that the building had been reroofed two months prior. All of that insulation failed and fell onto the ceiling tiles as a result of the roofing project. Unfortunately, since the area above the ceiling is used as an air return, the particles, fibers, and dust from the insulation worked their way down into the tenant spaces.

The Fix: The large chunks of insulation needed to be removed, the ceiling tiles needed to be

[Continued on Page 2 ...](#)

4



And Set Alternative Goals for the New Year

At the start of each new year, about half of all Americans set at least one New Year's resolution, a promise to themselves that they *will* thrive in the coming year. Unfortunately, research from YouGov Omnibus, an international market research firm, found that only 1 in 5 Americans stuck to their resolutions. The fallibility of New Year's resolutions is why few successful CEOs or leaders bother making them.

Around this time of year, plenty of articles pop up with hot takes like "Don't set New Year's resolutions; make *goals* instead!" Unfortunately, if you haven't been making goals already, you've likely been setting yourself up for failure. Setting goals, achieving them, and making new ones should be a habit all year long, not just something you do on Jan. 1. The start of a new year is still a great time to reflect and strategize, but rather than fall on an old cliché, take a page from two of the most successful people in business.

Reflect on 2019 with Tim Ferriss.

For decades, entrepreneur and best-selling author Tim Ferriss made New Year's resolutions every year. Then, he developed a better strategy. "I have found 'past year reviews' (PYR) more informed, valuable, and actionable than half-blindly looking forward with broad resolutions," Ferriss said in a 2018 blog post.

At the start of each year, Ferriss spends an hour going through his calendar from the past 12 months and making a note of every person, activity, or commitment that sparked the strongest emotions, both positive and negative. The most positive events get rescheduled immediately for the new year. Meanwhile, the negative ones get put on a "Not-To-Do List" and hung up where Ferriss can see them.

Pick a word of the year with Melinda Gates.

"I do believe in starting the new year with new resolve," says Melinda Gates, co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, "but instead of adopting a resolution, I choose a word of the year — a word that encapsulates my aspirations for the 12 months ahead."

Gates says that words like "spacious" or "grace" have helped her center herself and serve as a reminder about what she really wants to focus on. In 2019, Gates chose the word "shine," stating that, "It's a reminder for all of us to turn on the lights inside of us, lift each other up, and shine together."

That's So Last Year

IS YOUR BUILDING SUFFERING FROM OUTDATED 'TRENDS'?

With the new year comes a new opportunity to be hip — or at least more put together than last year. Commercial buildings don't often have to worry about being trendy, but there are some outdated problems we see in buildings every day that could easily be addressed. Here are some outdated "trends" you can fix that will improve both the look of your building and its indoor air quality.

Spotted ceilings aren't vogue.

Acoustical ceiling tiles are a common sight in commercial buildings. They do a great job of providing a bright, consistent ceiling. However, if they get water stained, then they can also do a great job of making the building occupants uneasy about IAQ.

Water leaks on acoustical ceiling tiles can become quickly obvious, but they can also be beneficial, as even a small leak can be indicative of larger problems in the future. Water leaks should always be addressed quickly by property management. After repairing the leak, it's important that any water-damaged ceiling tiles be replaced quickly.

It's not uncommon for ceiling tiles stained with water damaged to raise concerns about mold, even if the water stains are years old. Mold will only grow on acoustical tiles in response to a chronic leak. A short, one-time leak won't usually support mold. Unfortunately, few people are aware of this fact. If building occupants look up and see stained tiles, they can begin to worry about mold and the air quality inside your building, even if there are no problems.

This year, train your staff to know that replacing ceiling tiles is part of fixing water leaks. This will help eliminate many occupant concerns regarding mold.



Gardens (in your AHU) are out!

When building occupants raise concerns about IAQ, one of our first responses is to check the air handler units (AHU). Failure in an aspect of AHU maintenance can generate problem-causing contaminants. Some of the major components that can create problems are:

Fan Assembly – While the fan housing might be clean, the fan blades hidden inside often aren't. Dirty blades can be a source of excess particles in the air.

Coil Surfaces – When dust and dirt make it past the filter system, they can become impacted by the coil. Black or slimy discoloration on the surface of the coil is a sign of bacteria, which you don't want getting kicked into the air.

Drain Pans – If condensate drain pans aren't draining properly, water can collect and stagnate. If you've ever come across a pool of stagnant water outside, you know what this smells like. Pans should be flushed out regularly and equipped with antimicrobial tablets to prevent bacteria from growing.

Internal Insulation – The insulation near the evaporator coil can become a garden of mold. This can happen if water is thrown off the coil and into the insulation.

Regular, thorough maintenance of your AHU can keep these problems from occurring.

IAQ problems will never be "in." While you can't prevent all problems, educating building owners and property managers and keeping them up with the times will help them avoid preventable IAQ woes.

... continued from Cover.

vacuumed, and the damage that was done to the underside of the deck above needed to be repaired.

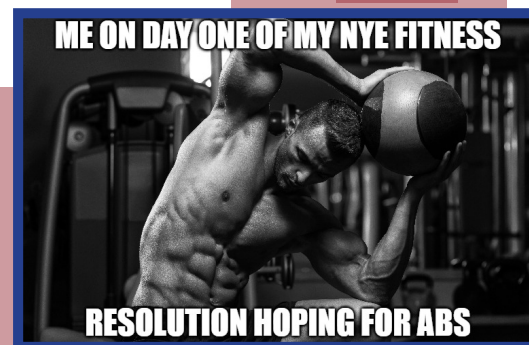
The Result: The airborne particle count of these four offices went back to normal.

If we didn't check airborne particles during our surveys, we would not have had the data to solve the problems in any of these buildings and insist on the repairs that needed to be done.

I'm beginning to encourage others in my field to make particle counts part of their initial survey and learn how to read that data so they can give their clients valid information. We have lots of data using particle counters that show us what is healthy and what isn't healthy inside all kinds of commercial buildings. Airborne particles can give a lot of insight into what's going on in your building too.

Train West

HAVE A LAUGH WITH TRAVIS



Resource of the Month:



Meet Your New Personal Editor

We've all seen it happen: Some business just published a new social media post that has just the right amount of biting humor while still sending an important message to their target demographic. Unfortunately, no one cares about the message, because the comments are too busy pointing out the typo.

On the internet, using "there" instead of "their" is basically an invitation for mockery. Never mind that it was an honest error; everyone is waiting for a chance to point out a mistake. This is why it's so important to have an editor review everything before it's published. Even professional writers make mistakes, and the human brain isn't great at picking up errors in our own writing. Unfortunately, it's not always feasible to have a dedicated editor review every tweet or email blast. This is when Grammarly comes in to save the day.

The clever web extension serves as your personal online editor. Grammarly integrates with your browser, checking for spelling or grammar errors while you write and offering suggestions as needed. Rather than feel like a "backseat writer," the intuitive user interface provides instant feedback without interrupting your writing flow.

Grammarly has gained popularity thanks to its effectiveness and its personalization features. You can make Grammarly as astute as you need it to be. Need help with passive voice or word repetitions? Grammarly's eagle-eyed programming has you covered. Just need a simple spell-check and some help avoiding the "your/you're" sin? Dial down the program with ease.

The written word is a powerful tool for your business and your brand. Emails, blogs, and social media posts all play a huge role in creating your image. Putting out copy with regular typos and grammar mistakes suggests laziness at best and a lack of education at worst. Grammarly helps make sure every word you put into the world reflects well on your business. Download the extension at Grammarly.com and see if this program is write for you.

