

A Fresh Start for Spring

Spring is in high gear and what better time is there to do a quick bit of “spring cleaning” when it comes to your health and habits? Changing old habits can be hard, but not impossible. The need for self-improvement comes from caring about *you*. Be open to the idea of change and stay focused on the positive end result.

Here are some tips for making changes that last:

1. Know yourself. Make a change for *you*. Identify your reasons for self-improvement. Think about them and write them down, then refer to them frequently. Say them out loud!

2. Make a plan. Outline your long- and short-term goals and build in rewards along the way.

3. Measure your progress. Maintain new habits through self-monitoring. If weight loss is your goal, weigh in at least once a week.

4. Reward yourself as you reach your short-term goals to help you stay motivated. Make sure the rewards go along with your new healthful habits (i.e. don't treat yourself to ice cream after weight loss).

5. Set up for success. Change one habit at a time to avoid being overwhelmed. Being

successful with one change will help build confidence to change something else. Remember, baby steps.

6. Change the bad for the good. Identify what you get from the bad behavior and find

a positive way to meet that need. Write down how you'll feel after you exercise or eat well. This will help keep you motivated.

7. Partner up. Find one or more people with similar goals who can share your experiences. Buddy up for walks, exercise classes, or healthful cooking demos. Friends, family, or coworkers will act as support and keep you accountable.

8. Avoid “all or nothing” thinking. Being perfect is not only impossible, trying to do it sets you up for guilt and failure. You're only human.

9. Don't sabotage your efforts. If weight loss is your goal, stock up on healthful food and keep unwanted treats out of your sight.

10. Plan for relapses. Have a plan for how to deal with a slip-up. Spend less energy on the relapse and get back on track — don't beat yourself up! Tomorrow is always a new day.

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