

New Year's Resolutions: Setting up success!

Many people resolve to make healthy changes in the New Year. Maybe you are thinking of quitting smoking, saving money for a family vacation, or making more regular appointments with your healthcare provider – any positive or healthy changes are good for you! New year's resolutions can also be a good time to get your family involved – maybe they would like to make some changes, too!

Keep in mind that broken resolutions can be hard on your self esteem, so try to set goals that are realistic and achievable, and avoid setting yourself up for failure. The most successful resolutions are the ones that are realistic and positive! Read on for some tips on how to make – and stick to – your New Year's Resolutions.

- If you can, offer yourself a reward for your hard work. People often succeed at saving money if they have a goal in mind, and are less successful when there is no clear end in sight. Even if a major vacation isn't in the cards this year, perhaps a massage or haircut is.
- Try to think about what you will do, rather than what you won't do. Can you smoke two less cigarettes a day, or get out for a 15 minute walk at lunch?
- Enlist your doctor's help if you are thinking of making a big change, such as quitting smoking, changing your eating habits, or starting a new exercise routine.
- Consider involving your children, or your friends! Sometimes a little good-natured competition can help motivate you. Or maybe you can use a buddy system to stay on track.
- Think about why making this change is important to you, then write it down and keep it in a place that is visible so you can refer to it often, especially if things get difficult! You might also ask your kids to give you some feedback, too – they might add some ideas you hadn't thought of!
- To make your goal feel realistic, try to break it down into small, manageable steps. If you want to train to run your first marathon, for example, you could break your goal down into monthly steps. First, try to run a realistic distance three times per week. Then after a month or so, up the distance. The following month, up the frequency.

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- Remember that slip-ups happen, and they aren't a sign of failure! Although it can be disappointing, try to forgive yourself and get back on track (maybe by reading the list of reasons to change that you created)!
- Along with going easy on yourself and forgiving slip-ups, try to avoid perfectionist, all-or-nothing thinking in general. No one is perfect, and changing habits and behaviours takes time and repetition.
- As well, if you think of your change in the big picture, one slip-up won't erase a month of hard work. It helps to keep perspective – your family and friends can help encourage you.

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