

# IMPACT YOUR LIFE FOR THE BETTER.



## CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATH

We all have the ability to create positive and lasting change in our lives. By choosing to make lasting and positive changes, we can impact the way we live our lives. If there are positive changes that you want to make in the upcoming year, read on for some helpful suggestions on making those changes, adopting good habits and achieving your goals.

**set goals >**  
**make changes >**  
**transform yourself >**

### 1. Identify what you want

#### Commit to self-inspection

To truly incorporate change into your life, you first need to look at your current lifestyle—change begins when you reflect on yourself and your habits.

#### Focus on the positive

Think about what you already do that's good and healthy, then think about how to improve upon that. Write down your ideas as a written commitment to yourself to change.

### 2. Create a goal

#### It's goal time

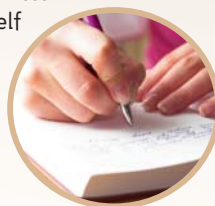
Set goals that define exactly what you want to achieve in clear and measurable ways. Your goals should be:

- Important to you—something you feel passionate about
- Focused on positive actions rather than negative actions
- Specific, measurable, realistic, achievable and time-based (so that you can chart your progress)

For example, instead of saying "I want to drink more water," rephrase that as "I want to drink eight glasses of water each day." By doing this, the habit is easier to instill, easier to track and more likely to become a permanent addition to your daily routine.

#### Break it down

If your desired habit is a big one, divide it into "bite-sized" pieces—get comfortable with one part of the habit before you progress onto the next part. Working in baby steps will help make large changes easier to incorporate. Plus, you can enjoy the process of achieving the short-term goals while motivating yourself to keep up your progress.



### 3. Set a deadline

#### Make a date

By setting a deadline for yourself, you'll be motivated to keep working toward your goals. A set date allows you to check in on your progress and re-evaluate as necessary. If you haven't met your goals, redefine them and keep moving forward.

### 4. Just do it

With your plan, goals and deadlines in place, it's time to seize the day.

#### Avoid procrastinating

Jump in and go for it. Once you've begun, remain positive, motivated and focused on achieving one small goal at a time.

#### Any movement forward is progress

Don't be afraid to take small steps if necessary. The main purpose of jumping in headfirst is to get into a mindset of change. Once you take some of those small initial steps and build momentum, you'll be closer to your goals and even more motivated to keep working.



### 5. Get accountability

#### Go public

As evidenced by government initiatives to make their goals public, going public about your intended change forms a psychological contract. This makes going back on your progress much more difficult. By informing people who care about you and your goals, they can help you stay on track when times get tough.

### 6. Track your progress

#### Journal

With consistent journal entries, you'll be able to look back on your journey to evaluate what worked, what didn't and what you should try again. You'll also be able to track your progress against your initial goals and see how much you've grown.



#### Use reminders

When you first start to make changes, you might need to use external triggers to keep yourself on track. Use whatever you need—alarms, notes, friends, a ribbon around your finger, etc.

Changing yourself or your habits is not an easy endeavor. Depending on the complexity of your goals, it could take as little as a few days or as long as several months to see results. The reward of your hard work comes with the positive changes you make in yourself.



# Motivating Strategies

Having difficulties in making those new habits stick? Below are a few strategies for keeping yourself on track, followed by some examples of how to use them. Try one, two or all of these if your motivation starts to wane.

- Ask a friend or family member to come by every day and perform your new activity with you.
- Promise yourself a reward for each time you stick to your plan.
- Announce your new habit to someone that you would not want to disappoint, and make adopting that habit a promise to them.
- Spend a little time each day thinking about why you think your change is important and what the long-term effects of adopting it will be. Visualize your success.
- Make it difficult to *not* do the new habit—set up obstacles so that it is impossible not to do.
- When you think about performing the habit, follow through and just do it (instead of only thinking about it).
- If you're trying to change a bad behavior, make it very difficult to do.
- Pat yourself on the back for every success, no matter how small.
- Pay attention to tips and strategies that work for you in developing new habits—these might be helpful when working on future goals.
- Instead of spending time beating yourself up for not doing something, take that time and use it in doing your new habit.
- Be happy with the baby steps—one step forward is still one step forward, no matter how small it is.
- Acknowledge what you have accomplished and how far you have come on a frequent basis. Celebrate your successes.

**Do whatever it takes to accomplish the task for the first few weeks. With time and repetition, what once took so much motivation to do will become automatic habits in your life.**

## PUT INTO PRACTICE: Examples for making those habits work!

**DESIRED HABIT: Use cash instead of credit cards in order to control spending.** Make it difficult to get to your credit card by literally freezing it in a block of ice.

**DESIRED HABIT: Start each day with a morning walk or run.** Make it easier to accomplish by laying out your workout clothes before you go to bed.

**DESIRED HABIT: Wake up a half-hour earlier each morning (and quit pushing that snooze button).**

Make it difficult to stay in bed by moving the alarm to the other side of the room or setting your lights or TV on a timer.

**DESIRED HABIT: Save money for a long-term goal.** Don't be afraid to start small. Set up an off-limits jar in the kitchen for change and small bills, then contribute to it as often as possible.

**DESIRED HABIT: Take the stairs at work instead of the elevator.** Enlist your friends and coworkers' help by making your habit public—tell them to remind you if you try to board the elevator, or make them kick you off a few floors before your destination so you have to take at least a few flights of stairs each day.

**DESIRED HABIT: Folding clothes as soon as the laundry is done (instead of letting them sit in the basket for a week).** Make this task easy to remember, and hard not to do, by taking out the laundry and setting it on the dining table, on your bed or even in the bathroom sink (if you have to fold it before eating, sleeping or brushing your teeth, it's more likely to get done).

**DESIRED HABIT: Get moving more often.** Make it easier to do by hiding the TV remote, parking at the back of the lot instead of up front by the store entrance and/or getting off the bus or metro a few stops early in order to walk the rest of the distance.

**DESIRED HABIT: Drink water throughout the day (instead of coffee, soda or juices).** Make it easier to do by purchasing a water bottle belt and carrying your water with you throughout the day.

**DESIRED HABIT: Spend more time with the family (and less time in front of the TV).** Take a week and tape or TiVo® all your favorite shows and postpone watching them until after the week is through. Place a stack of games by the TV as a reminder of a fun alternative to the tube.

