



Working TOWARD Wellness

LIVE BETTER. LIVE LONGER.

PROVIDED BY HEART HEALTH ACTION WINDSOR-ESSEX
AND THE WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH UNIT



NEW YEAR'S A GREAT TIME TO CHANGE?

The New Year brings with it a tradition of renewal, a chance for new possibilities. This is a time of the year when people think about, and “commit”, to changing their life for the better. For many, these desired changes are based on societal norms, or the things they see people do that they would like to do themselves. For others, the intention to change something in their lives is driven more from within. No matter what leads to the desire to change and the selection of attitudes or behaviours to change, the one common factor is that most people do not follow through with their “commitment”.

There are many reasons why this might be the case. For example, January 1st might not be the best time of the year to commit to making a significant lifestyle change. This can be a stressful time of the year, filled with high expectations (many unmet) and serious over spending. New Year’s Eve,

a time when many people make their commitment to change, is also often associated with over consumption of alcohol - not a great mix when making any type of important decision!

Changing behaviour is not impossible, but it does take time and hard work. Many set themselves up for failure by setting vague goals or resolutions that they aren’t serious about. They haven’t made a firm commitment and they do not have a solid plan in place to help guide them through the change process.

No matter what time of the year it is, making a plan to improve your health is always a good idea. Whether it’s losing weight, being more active, improving your diet, managing stress better or quitting smoking, any commitment to change your behaviour CAN be achieved.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE!

- | | T | F |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Most New Year’s resolutions are not achieved. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Setting goals will make your habit much more difficult to change. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. If you plan how to deal with obstacles or challenges, you will be better equipped to overcome them when they occur. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. To make a successful change in a habit, the costs of keeping the old habit must outweigh the benefits of changing it. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. To lose weight in a healthy way, you need to include changes in what you eat OR what you do for physical activity. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. An example of a real barrier to making a lifestyle change is lack of time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. If you don’t believe that you will succeed, you are less likely to make a long-term change. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. It’s a good idea to make more than one resolution at a time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. You can help your co-workers by supporting them in their decision to quit smoking. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. If your resolution is related to improved stress management, a SMART goal would be, “I will manage stress better.” | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Set SMART Goals

Setting one goal at a time is an important step to making a successful long-term change in your life. Make each goal you set a smart goal:

Specific - Be very specific about the new behaviour that you want to change.

Measurable - Set a benchmark for success and track what you do on a regular basis.

Achievable - Make the goal challenging; not too easy but not too hard, either.

Realistic - develop a new habit that can be done regularly for a long time.

Time limited - Make your goals “doable” within a set period of time. You may have goals with different lengths of time e.g. on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

see answers on back panel

Why ARE RESOLUTIONS SO HARD TO KEEP?

Most people have good intentions when it comes to making a commitment to change, but the problem is that most rarely follow through with their commitment. This happens because many resolutions are nothing more than vague wishes or dreams with no plan on how to work toward them or maintain them. If it was as simple as making a wish, then most of us would be very rich!

Also, many make more than one resolution at a time, such as losing weight, managing stress or quitting smoking. These resolutions require difficult behaviour changes, each deserving your full and complete effort. When people try to change more than one habit at a time, the task becomes too overwhelming. This sets them up for failure and leads them back to their old patterns of

behaviour. For that reason, it is best to choose one habit, the one that's most important to you, and commit to making that change.

To be successful in making and keeping any change in your habit or behaviour, there is a certain set of elements that need to be in place. In other words, if these elements are not present, then your chances of being successful in changing old habits is greatly reduced.

If you are really serious about keeping your New Year's resolution this year, or making a change at any other time of the year, you need a commitment and a workable plan. You need to examine your reasons and beliefs about why you want to make a change, and be prepared to work through the barriers and challenges to achieve that change.

How CAN YOU INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS AND STICKING WITH IT?

GET STARTED

No matter what time of the year it is, any change that you try to make to improve your health should include the following elements to achieve success:

1. Choose to change only one habit at a time.
2. Take time to think about whether this is something that you really want to do. In other words, make a commitment to change the habit.
3. Set SMART goals and work towards them. This includes increasing your knowledge and learning new skills. Remember to keep track of your short-term goals and progress. Give yourself "check marks" when you complete daily or weekly strategies.
4. Plan how you are going to deal with challenges or barriers that you will certainly face. This will help you to overcome them and stay on track.
5. Ask for support from family, friends and co-workers. Let them know your plan to change and tell them how they can help.

6. Believe that the benefits of changing the habit outweigh the costs of keeping the habit. Examine your beliefs and emotions, and visualize how this change will positively affect your health and how you feel about yourself.

TAKE STEPS

Once you have decided on the habit that you want to change, consider how to include the rest of the success elements. To help you get started, some examples of these elements are provided for three of the most popular annual resolutions that people make: losing weight, managing stress better and quitting smoking. For your own plan, you can build on these examples.

I WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT

To lose weight in a healthy way, you need to include changes in what you eat AND in what you do for physical activity. Also, focus on a healthy weight loss of not more than 1-2 pounds per week.

Goals

1. "I will eat at least three servings of vegetables every day."
2. "I will walk at a brisk pace for at least 30 minutes, five days a week."

Plan for Challenges

1. "If I find it hard to eat cooked vegetables, then I will eat more raw veggies with low-fat dip."
2. "If I can't find enough time to exercise after working all day, then I will plan to build it in during the work day."

Social Support

1. "My wife agreed to purchase and prepare vegetables more often."
2. "My co-worker agreed to join me for a 30-minute walk right after work, before our commute home."

Skills

1. "I will attend a healthy eating class that is led by a Registered Dietitian."
2. "I will learn about proper foot ware for walking by talking to an expert at a sports shoe store."

What KINDS OF "BARRIERS" CAN STAND IN YOUR WAY?

Barriers are obstacles or challenges that stand in the way of you successfully changing your behaviour. These barriers may be real or perceived or both, and are different for each resolution. However, they do share some common features.

Real barriers include things such as: lack of time; not enough money, child care and family responsibilities; lack of knowledge or skills; or, inflexible work hours. Perceived barriers may

include things like: feeling pressured; wanting to fit in; or, worrying about how others will feel about your change efforts.

The good news is that for every barrier, real or perceived, there is a way to overcome it.

Before you try to change a habit, identify barriers that you believe you may experience and make a plan for how you are going to deal with them when they arise.

CHALLENGES OF MAKING A CHANGE

I WANT TO MANAGE STRESS BETTER

Stress is a part of everyday living. Your plan should focus on those things that minimize stress by changing things that you can control as well as developing a strategy for dealing with those things that are out of your control.

Goal

"I will try not to take it personally when someone cuts me off or tailgates when I am driving."

Plan for Challenges

"I have a rubber clown's nose that I keep in my glove box. I will put it on whenever someone cuts me off or tailgates."

Social Support

"I have told my family about my goal to change how I react to other drivers and I have asked them to remind me if I am over reacting."

Skills

"I will take the safe driving course that is being offered through our workplace wellness program."

I WANT TO QUIT SMOKING

Whether this is your first or fifth attempt at quitting, if you can continue for six weeks without smoking, chances are good that you will be able to quit for good.

Goal

"I will quit smoking in my house and car." This is a key step for many who want to quit. For others, not smoking anywhere may work better.

Plan for Challenges

"If I want to have a cigarette after I finish a meal, I will immediately brush my teeth instead."

Social Support

"A group of co-workers who are also trying to quit have agreed to meet once a week to share ideas on staying smoke-free."

Skills

"I will talk to my doctor about the 'patch' (nicotine replacement) and other non-nicotine medications that may help me quit."

Go for it!

RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

Contact the Health Unit for information and programs on losing weight the healthy way, managing stress better and quitting smoking.
519-258-2146 x 3100

Losing Weight the Healthy Way
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
1-888-473-4636
www.heartandstroke.ca
Click on "Healthy Living" for resources and the interactive program, "Healthy Weight Healthy You"

Dietitians of Canada
www.dietitians.ca
(click on "Eat Well, Live Well", then go to "One day @ a time")

Nutrition Labelling Education Centre
www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca

Web MD
www.webmd.com
Search site for "weight loss"

Managing Stress
Canadian Mental Health Association
416-484-7750
www.cmha.ca
Search site for "stress"

Stress Tips
www.umich.edu/~fasap/stresstips/contents.html

Quitting Smoking
Smokers' Help Line
Canadian Cancer Society
1-888-513-5333
www.cancer.ca

QuitNet.com, Inc.
www.quitnet.com

www.wehealthunit.org and at
www.windsor-heart-health.com

CLIP & KEEP THIS INFO!

RESOLUTION FOR CHANGE

My Mini-plan

Clip and keep this as your reminder to stay on target to improve your health. Keep it in your wallet or purse, or post it in a place such as your fridge or at work where you will see it everyday. Remember the six conditions for success.

My Resolution:

My Goals: (Identify 2 SMART goals to get you started)

1. _____
2. _____

My Challenges: (Identify 2 challenges and your plan for dealing with them)

Challenge: _____

Plan: _____

Challenge: _____

Plan: _____

- I believe that I will benefit more from making this change than if I don't change and that I can visualize that I will be successful.
- I have asked for, and am receiving support from, my family, friends and co-workers to help achieve my resolution.
- I am seeking out information and learning new skills to help me achieve my resolution.

Pass it on!

Please feel free to copy any articles in this brochure as long as you acknowledge the source.

Make it happen at your workplace!

Here are some suggestions to encourage and support successful New Year's resolutions in your workplace:

Losing Weight the Healthy Way:

- Pack your lunch and snacks to better manage your portion sizes and energy intake at work.
- Ask for healthy food and drink choices in vending machines.
- Focus on bringing more vegetables and fruit to work for meals and snacks.
- Start a walking club or buddy-up with a friend and go for walks before, during or after work.
- Promote and encourage using the stairs instead of elevators.
- Walk or bike to work or if you drive, park further away.

Managing Stress:

- Build in stretch breaks and meal/snack breaks throughout your work day
- Prioritize tasks and discuss them with your supervisor so that you both have clear expectations of the job.
- Don't sweat the little things. Focus on things that are important and within your control.

Quitting Smoking:

- Support your co-workers who are trying to quit by encouraging them or quitting with them.
- Work with your employer to see if you can make stop smoking programs easily available to smokers in your workplace.

"If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere."

Anonymous

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Answers (from front page): 1-T • 2-F • 3-T • 4-F • 5-F • 6-T • 7-T • 8-F • 9-T • 10-T

For more information about the Workplace Health Promotion Program, contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit at 258-2146 x 3100



This brochure and others in this series available online at:
www.wehealthunit.org and at www.windsor-heart-health.com