



REAL LIFE

MAY 2015

SOLUTIONS

Set healthy goals one small step at a time

Making successful changes means creating the right plan for your specific needs. Plans for change usually involve a few simple steps: Setting your goal, tracking progress, rewarding success, and managing any setbacks in a healthy, positive way.

Set your goal *Create specific, realistic goals.*

- **Decide where you want to start.** Focus on one small goal at a time. This could be eat a healthy breakfast, get eight hours of sleep each night, or read a book 10 minutes every day.
- **Set up a realistic timeline for meeting your goals.** The self-confidence you get from accomplishing a small goal helps keep you on your path for achieving your big goal.
- **Write down your goals and why you want to achieve them. Post them** where you will constantly see them. This provides you with clear direction and also the motivation to keep at it.
- **Involve your family and friends.** They can provide support and encouragement.
- **When you're ready, set a new health goal.** As your small changes add up, you'll see that you've made significant changes to your habits without too much fuss or interruption to your life.

Track your progress
It's important to track your progress when you are trying to change a habit. It helps you to see if you're meeting your goals and serves as a reminder to keep trying.

- **Record the healthy things you do.** Write it down in a notebook or start an online journal with visible charts to help track your progress. You can also look this over when you begin to doubt yourself or your abilities.
- **Pay attention to how you feel.** Can you notice any difference when you're making healthy choices? Do you feel different when you aren't making healthy choices? Have your habits started to change?
- **Consider tests to measure success.** You and your doctor may decide that certain tests will help see if your diet and exercise plans are working. Or check your online charts and journal to look at your progress.

Reward yourself
When you reach your goal, reward yourself in a healthy way.

- **Reward every success, no matter how small.** Tie each reward to a specific, measurable goal, such as eating three servings of vegetables every day for a week or taking the stairs at work, drinking more water, or spending more time with family.

- **Make your rewards healthy ones.** Pick a reward such as the latest tech gadget, a night at the movies, or a massage. Or choose something that will help you maintain your health habits, such as a new cookbook or a health monitor.
- **Big success? Big reward.** When you meet challenging goals, reward your hard work with something special.

Manage setbacks
A setback is not a failure. It's only a temporary detour!

- **Learn from this.** Setbacks are a natural part of the process. The secret is learning how to manage setbacks as you progress toward your goal. Use your setback as a chance to evaluate what happened, adjust your goal (is it realistic?), and modify your plan.
- **Don't give up!** Even if you have a setback, don't give up your plan altogether. Maybe your goal needs to be smaller or have "baby steps" to build momentum.

Setting and reaching personal goals can be challenging, yet rewarding! If you're running into obstacles in your journey, your EAP can help you overcome challenges you are facing and help you grow personally and professionally.

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