

GOALS: Achieving Better Health

You want to feel better. You want to live longer. You want to look great in your swim suit. Whatever the reason, most people want to improve or maintain their health. Here are some simple but important tips to guide you on your journey to a healthier mind, body, and spirit.

Be specific: Make your action plan clear and precise.

Ditch vague proclamations like “I’m going to quit eating so much junk.” Replace them with clear, specific plans such as “I will eat fewer than 65 grams of fat per day” or, even more precise, “I will add two pieces of fruit to my diet each day.”

Be measurable: Measurable action steps make tracking your progress a snap.

Instead of saying, “Whew, I really need to work on controlling my stress,” try “I will take twenty minutes for meditation at the start of each day six days per week.” There. Breathe in, breathe out, and easily monitor your efforts.

Be action-oriented: Make plans that include doing something reasonable.

There’s no way around it: to make real change you have to take real action. You can do it, but be sure your chosen action is in your direct control. So don’t announce, “I am going to take up mountain climbing” if you live in Nebraska. Instead, try “I will briskly walk within my training range for 30 minutes four times this week.”

Be realistic: Choose action steps that are largely within your reach.

Give yourself a break, already. If you currently live on take-out and cannot boil water, deciding that you’re going to cook ten new low-fat dishes next week might be a recipe for disaster. Instead, determine small lifestyle changes that are doable for you, like whipping up one new healthy menu item each week. Bon appetit!

Be timely: Establish a timetable for your specific, measurable, and realistic action.

Remember that the long run is just, well, *long*. Instead of “For the rest of my life, I need to drink a whole lot of water,” try “I will drink five glasses of water a day for the next week. Then I will increase it to six glasses of water a day the following week.” This may well become a lifelong habit, but break it down into manageable sips instead of one big gulp.

Be proactive: Know the value of creating good health, not simply treating disorder.

Everyone remembers the old saying, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” When it comes to your health, this proverb has definitely stood the test of time. Many diseases are totally preventable by incorporating the previous five tips into your healthcare regime, and others are greatly lessened in severity. So don’t wait. Begin meeting your health goals in a specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and timely manner today for a lifetime of stronger, more positive tomorrows.

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