



GENERAL WELLNESS

# MAKING YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION STICK!

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'Tis the season! As we look forward to 2024, many of us are considering what personal changes we want to make to lead us into having a wonderful new year. For so many of us, after the holiday cookies are put away, we will make the decision to commit to a health goal for the New Year- a New Year's Resolution, if you will!

But... perhaps you, like me, have made a New Year's Resolution in the past, and for some reason, it just hasn't stuck.

Because of that, you might be reticent to make one again. Let's consider how 2024 could be the year we make those healthy changes stick!

## Why Should I Consider Making a New Year's Resolution, and What Should I Consider Before Doing So?

I love celebrating the new year. It is an opportunity for us all to get a fresh start and to consider new goals. Setting goals for ourselves is wonderful! Goals give us something to work towards and provide us with a sense of purpose. Rather than remaining stagnant, they help us keep moving in a positive direction in our lives.

Before setting a goal for yourself or committing to a New Year's Resolution, it can be helpful to **consider the why** behind the goal. So, if your first thought is "I want to lose weight," "I want to stop smoking," or "I want to sleep better," WHY do you want to do those things? What do you hope will change in your life if you can do those things? Take time to close your eyes and envision what you will look and feel like after you have accomplished your goal.

Maybe you want to lose weight so you can finally get back to playing that sport you used to love. Perhaps you want to stop smoking so you will be less winded when playing with your grandchildren. Or maybe you want to sleep better because you want to concentrate better at work. The area of your life that would benefit from your change (hobbies, family

relationships, or career) is your why.

Identifying what area of your life you want to improve and WHY helps you find the MEANING behind the potential goal, and this can be really helpful when working towards the goal feels hard.

## How Do I Make My New Year's Resolution Stick?

Have you heard the saying, "If you don't have a goal, you'll certainly miss it?" So often, we start with a New Year's Resolution that is just too general.

When we say, "I want to eat better," or "I want to exercise more," or "I will be healthier," the goal is too broad, which makes it nearly impossible to keep up with. Instead, to set a goal that will stick, you need to be SMART when you set your goal.

### Set SMART Goals

SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. So, rather than saying, "I want to make healthier choices," think of one particular way you can live healthier. Some examples of SMART goals related to health are:

- "I will eat at least two servings of vegetables daily for the next month to improve my nutrition."
- "I will walk around the parking lot for 10 minutes on my lunch break three times a week for the next two weeks to reduce my stress and be more active."
- "I will go to bed at 10 p.m. on the days before I work so I can be more focused while at work."

Each of these SMART goals is really specific, which means they are easy to measure for accountability. They were written to be fairly easy to attain within a stated time frame and include the relevance to the person's "why" (ex, improve my nutrition, reduce my stress, be more focused).

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Being SMART with our New Year's Resolution gives us something to really work towards!



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## What If I Fail On My Resolution?

Change is hard! Most people who start towards a new goal will most certainly experience setbacks and challenges along the way. Remember, if your goal were easy, you likely would have done it already! So, be patient with yourself!

First of all, ***you didn't fail!*** You may have hit a roadblock or lost focus, but you can certainly get back up and try again. Even two steps forward and one step back is progress. So, show yourself some grace and keep going!

If you are getting stuck, go back and *look at the goal with a fresh perspective*. Ask yourself, WHY did I set that goal? What matters to me about it? Is it still important to me- why or why not? Regain a sense of focus and make sure your priorities are still the same. If so, recommit to the goal and problem solve. If priorities have shifted, you may need a new goal that aligns better with that which is most important to you.

*Assess what got in the way of you accomplishing your goal.* Was it an attainable goal, or did you reach too high? Maybe start with something a bit smaller that you KNOW you can do and get some forward momentum going.

Find a friend you trust and ask them to help you determine *what got in the way and what you can do differently* to set yourself up for success next time.

Sometimes a set of fresh eyes on the problem is exactly what you need to find a way to keep going!

*Avoid the comparison trap.* So often, we select a goal but then get discouraged when we see a friend on social media hitting a similar goal before we do. When this happens, we must remember to keep our focus on our own personal journey.

You may have different situational challenges that make your road to success different from theirs, which is okay! But, comparison to others will steal your joy and distract you from your goal. Remember, your journey is your own, and you are worth all the focus you put in along the way!

## What Are Some Good Ways to Stay Motivated to Reach My Health Goals?

### 1. Write down your goal and share it with others!

You will be more likely to stay motivated if you have the goal in front of you and if you have supportive people in your lives cheering you on and holding you accountable in a loving way.

### 2. Stop striving for perfection.

If you miss your goal one day, remember you can try again tomorrow, and it is okay!

### 3. Start each day with a reminder of the goal and the why behind the goal.

If, for example, you want to stop smoking to be more active with your grandchildren, perhaps putting a photo of you playing with your grandchildren near your coffee pot will motivate you to skip that cigarette you usually have with your coffee.

### 4. Celebrate little wins!

Breaking the goal into smaller steps and celebrating your success along the way can get you to your longer goals!

### 5. Build support.

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare is helping sponsor the Healthier 901 initiative, a focused effort to help our community live healthier. You can join the Healthier 901 initiative for free at [healthier901.com](https://healthier901.com) and find lots of resources and community support to help you on your quest to make that healthy New Year's Resolution stick!

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Congratulations on taking the first step towards a resolution that will result in a healthier you in 2024. Making the decision that you are worth investing in and working for is a huge step! Here's to a more resolute and healthier 2024 for all of us in the 901!

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