



GENERAL WELLNESS

## GETTING STARTED: SEVEN STEPS TO SPRING INTO WELLNESS

By *Your Health Staff*

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It's probably no secret that the choices we make each day (what we eat, when we sleep, how much we move, etc.) shape our overall health and quality of life over time.

In fact, if your health isn't where you want it to be, you may already know exactly what you need to do to improve matters.

The only problem is ... you haven't done it yet.

Getting started is hard, friends. Whether you've been down the road to healthier living before or are brand new to positive lifestyle changes, experts agree that starting isn't easy.

"When working toward change, often the biggest hurdle we face is getting started doing something different," said [Laura Shultz](#), senior director of Ambulatory Behavioral Health at Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare. "It isn't easy to change our ingrained habits, and it's vital we remember that consistency is more important than perfection. Sustainable, long-term change is a process, and small steps are often the most powerful tool to carry us to our destination."

New flowers and new life are all around us! Spring is the perfect time to do something new! Also, longer days and higher temps may make outdoor lifestyle activities more appealing. (Seasonal allergies got you beat? Tap into free on-demand workouts, healthy cooking recipes and a whole lot more through [Healthier 901!](#))



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## Tips to Spring into Wellness

Need a nudge to get you started? Scope out these seven steps to spring into wellness and welcome in a healthier you:

### 1. Set a Specific, Achievable Goal

First things first—figure out what target you are aiming for! Select a goal that feels like a good fit for you, and remember that you're far more likely to succeed if you set your sights on a realistic, measurable and achievable goal.

**Pro tip:** Don't be afraid to break bigger goals into bite-sized targets. For example, if your ultimate goal is to lose 50 pounds, it's okay (and even beneficial!) to start smaller and work your way up to those bigger wins.

### 2. Make Your Roadmap for Success

Once you know what you're working toward, the next critical step is creating a plan to achieve your goal. You may find that there are lots of pathways to success, and it's important to select a path that feels like the best choice for you. If your goal is to lose 10 pounds, for instance, does your plan involve healthier eating habits, more physical activity or a combination of both?

### 3. Find a Strong Support System

Change can be hard—but it doesn't have to be managed alone. Increase your odds of success by surrounding yourself with supporters who can share in the wins, encourage you through the losses and help you stay accountable to your goal.

**Pro tip:** While this might be the perfect time to tag in your best buddy, don't feel limited to friends and family on this one. Look for community in like-minded folks with common goals, such as in-person coworkers who might be eager to walk with you on breaks or [Healthier 901 community members](#) for online support and connection.

### 4. Keep Your Doctor in the Loop

Speaking of support, be sure to inform your primary care provider (PCP) of your goals along the way. In addition to having another champion in your corner, your PCP may help you identify additional avenues to achieve your goal, such as medications and/or community resources that could better position you for success. Your PCP can also help you track (and understand!) these [four critical numbers at the heart of good health](#).

### 5. Embrace Small Steps

Yes, we already talked up bite-sized targets in step #1—but small steps are a biggie, so this tip bears repeating. When it comes to lifestyle changes, slow and steady wins the race; in fact, research consistently shows that small, incremental changes are the key to long-term success.

**Pro tip:** Look for places to make small, positive changes within your daily routine. For example, if you typically take the elevator at work, try the stairs! Stock the candy bowl with healthy snacks, spend your next break stretching instead of scrolling and seek other opportunities to make small changes.

## 6. Give Yourself a Break - But Don't Give Up

Bad days happen. You're human, and setbacks are a totally normal part of the process. As Shultz says, consistency really is more important than perfection (not to mention, perfection isn't possible!). So be kind to yourself if you fall off the rails, and don't let setbacks get the best of you. Remember that lasting results take time, and today is a great day to get back on track.

## 7. Track Your Progress and Reward Those Wins!

You've maybe heard that what isn't measured isn't managed, and that's certainly true when it comes to lifestyle changes. Take advantage of the tracking tools (nutrition log, step counter, etc.) on the [Healthier 901 app](#), and find fun and rewarding ways to treat yourself when you realize a win.

**Pro tip:** Avoid food rewards like treating yourself to dinner, which can be counterproductive. Instead, participate in a fun activity, some well-earned relaxation, or a little retail therapy to celebrate your progress!

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## Join the Healthier 901 Movement!

Whatever your healthy lifestyle goals are, it's important to believe that a healthier you is possible. When in doubt, remember that you don't have to go it alone. [Join the Healthier 901 movement](#) (free of charge!) to access tools, discounts and like-minded community members working together to achieve a higher quality of life, one step at a time!

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