

**Happy New Year!** 2022 is here and Level Up wants you to *Seize the Year!* Stay tuned for more details on this exciting year-long Campaign!

The new year is all about reflecting, renewing, and reassessing your goals. If you've decided to change a habit—whether it's quitting smoking, lowering your blood pressure, becoming more active, or doing something else to improve your health—congratulations! Making that decision is the first step toward making a change.

## 1. Have your own reason for making a change.

- Your reason for wanting to change a habit is really important. Maybe you want to quit smoking so that you can avoid future health problems. Or maybe you want to eat a healthier diet so you can lose weight. If you have high blood pressure, your reason may be clear: to lower your blood pressure.
- You need to feel ready to make a change. If you don't feel ready now, that's okay. You can still be thinking and planning. When you truly want to make changes, you're ready for the next step.
- It's not easy to change habits. But taking the time to really think about what will motivate or inspire you will help you reach your goals.

## 2. Set goals that you can reach.

- When you are clear about your reasons for wanting to make a change, it's time to set your goals.
- Long-term goals: These are large goals that you want to reach in 6 to 12 months.
- Short-term goals: What are the things you can do now or relatively soon that will help you reach your long-term goals? Short-term goals are the small steps you take, week by week, to improve your health.
- Updated goals: To help you stay motivated, track your progress, and update your goals as you move forward.

Try these tips for setting goals:

- **Focus on small goals.** This will help you reach larger goals over time. With smaller goals, you'll have success more often, which will help you stay with it.
- **Write down your goals.** This will help you remember, and you'll have a clearer idea of what you want to achieve.
- **Make your goals specific.** Specific goals help you measure your progress. For example, setting a goal to eat 5 helpings of fruits and vegetables 5 days a week is better than a general goal to "eat more vegetables."
- **Focus on one goal at a time.** By doing this, you're less likely to feel overwhelmed and then give up.
- **When you reach a goal, reward yourself.** Celebrate your new behavior and success for several days and then think about setting your next goal.

## 3. Prepare for slip-ups.

- It's perfectly normal to try to change a habit, go along fine for a while, and then have a setback. Lots of people try and try again before they reach their goals.
- What are the things that might cause a setback for you? If you have tried to change a habit before, think about what helped you and what got in your way.
- By thinking about these barriers now, you can plan ahead for how to deal with them if they happen.
- There will be times when you slip up and don't make your goal for the week. When that happens, don't get mad at yourself. Learn from the experience. Ask yourself what got in the way of reaching your goal. Positive thinking goes a long way when you're making lifestyle changes.

## 4. Get support.

The more support you have for making lifestyle changes, the easier it is to make those changes.

Try these tips for getting support:

- **Get a partner.** It's motivating to know that someone is trying to make the same lifestyle change that you're making, like being more active or changing your eating habits. You have someone who is counting on you to help him or her succeed. That person can also remind you how far you've come.
- **Get friends and family involved.** They can exercise with you or encourage you by saying how they admire what you are doing. Family members can join you in your healthy eating efforts. Don't be afraid to tell family and friends that their encouragement makes a big difference to you.
- **Join a class or support group.** People in these groups often have some of the same barriers you have. They can give you support when you don't feel like staying with your plan. They can boost your morale when you need a lift. You'll also find a number of online support groups.
- **Give yourself positive reinforcement.** When you feel like giving up, don't waste energy feeling bad about yourself. Remember your reason for wanting to change, think about the progress you've made, and give yourself a pep talk and a pat on the back.

**Be well and continue to elevate your total well-being.  
Have an awesome and productive 2022!**

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