

New Year's Resolutions: How to stick to your goals



The new year often feels like the perfect time to turn a new page and start fresh. Many of us make big resolutions like eating healthier, exercising more, saving money, or learning something new. Yet by February, those goals often start to fade, and by March, most people go back to old habits.

Why does this happen? It is usually because our goals are vague, unrealistic, or we do not have a clear plan.

To turn resolutions into reality, follow the **SMART method**. It is an easy way to turn big ideas into clear, specific goals. With the SMART method, your goals should be:

- **Specific:** Have a clear area you want to focus on.
- **Measurable:** Be able to track your progress, like using a habit tracker.
- **Achievable:** Make sure your goal is realistic and within reach.
- **Relevant:** The goal should be worthwhile and fit your values.
- **Time-bound:** Set a start and end date to create urgency and structure.

Instead of the vague goal of, “I will be more physically active”, make it a S.M.A.R.T. goal by changing this to, “I will take the stairs instead of the elevator at work every day for the next three months.”

Tips to sticking to resolutions and creating long-lasting change:

- **Plan ahead:** Do not wait until the last minute to choose your goals. Take time to brainstorm what you want to do and write down a detailed plan with *how* you are going to achieve your goals. This helps increase commitment and motivation.
- **Start small:** Break big goals into smaller steps and focus on one behaviour at a time. Taking small steps will help you reach your goal through building your confidence, making it easier to stick to your goals.
- **Track progress:** Use apps, journals, checklists, or calendars to track your progress.
- **Celebrate wins:** Reward yourself when you hit milestones.
- **Find accountability:** Share goals with a friend or join a group to help keep you motivated.

This year, do not just make resolutions, make a plan. By making goals SMART, you set yourself up for success and lasting change. If things do not go as planned, that is okay. Take a step back and adjust the plan as needed.

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