

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

KEEPING YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Over time, small and steady changes can lead to big results.

This year I'm going to get in shape, save more money, get organized, stop smoking, drink less, eat healthier, and spend more time with family and friends. Sound familiar? These are some of the most popular New Year's resolutions, but most are abandoned by February. Why is it so difficult to break bad habits and stick to healthy ones?

While positive change is possible, setting too many expectations all at once and creating unrealistic goals is a recipe for failure. Real change takes time, effort, and patience. Replacing a bad habit with a healthy one or mastering something new often takes weeks or months before it becomes routine. Instead of a long list of resolutions, try focusing this year on just one or two behaviors that will create the most change in your life. For example, if your resolution is to go to the gym and get in shape, write down specific, measurable goals and:

- Block off time in your calendar on a weekly basis for gym days and be prepared the night before with gym clothes, water, etc.
- Join an exercise class, perhaps with a friend, so you can hold each other accountable.
- Use technology to help you track your progress, such as fitness monitors and apps.
- Stay motivated and combat boredom with a variety of fitness activities. This is especially important because getting in shape usually takes time, and you won't see the results right away.
- Don't give up if you have a setback. If you miss a week or so of exercise, it doesn't mean that all is lost and you should quit. Pick up where you left off and keep going.
- Ask family and friends to support your efforts and encourage you when you feel unmotivated.

Healthy habits are strengthened and reinforced when you see what you are accomplishing and feel good about your choices. Remember that real change doesn't happen overnight. Commitment and patience are key. Just as your money in a 401(k) or savings account compounds over time, so do healthy choices build on each other and compound over time – leading to positive results.

