

Out with Old Habits, In With New Ones

Barix Clinics

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If you typically start the New Year with a list of resolutions and solid intentions yet give up before January is over, you're not alone. Eighty percent of people do just that. We all settle into patterns of learned behavior or habits, which are comfortable. Many daily tasks are done on autopilot—with little conscious thought required. These behaviors, good or bad, tend to stay stable over time until we drum up the motivation to change.

To make lasting changes to our habits, we need to have a planned out process. We need to be willing to sacrifice to make it happen. Here are five steps to take right now to make this year different.



Step 1: Write down your goals in clear and measurable terms. I want to be fit is too vague. Instead, get very specific. I want to be able to run a 5k in 22 minutes by June 1. Get crystal clear on what you want and write it down.

Little by little becomes a lot.

Step 2: Uncover the “why.” Having a good understanding of the real purpose of your goal helps you stay motivated. Your goal may be to earn \$10,000 more this year. Define what that money will do for you: establish

a savings account so you have a safety net, get a more reliable car, or pay off debt. The purpose will keep you motivated when things get challenging.

Step 3: Decide what you are willing to give up to make this goal a reality. Say you've decided that your goal is to prepare five home-cooked meals every week. You will have to be willing to give up time to shop, prep, and cook.

Step 4: Make a plan and take action. What are the steps that you need to take to reach your goal? How will you measure your progress?

To run a 5k in 22 minutes by June 1, you may decide to follow a couch to 5k program. You will go to bed and get up 30 minutes earlier each day to treadmill time. Your progress can be measured on a fitness app.

To earn \$10,000 additional income this year, you may decide to work a part-time job. If the part-time position pays \$15 per hour, you'll need to work 13 hours each week to reach your goal. If you plan to save the money, deposit the checks into a separate account that will grow by \$833 a month.

To prepare five home-cooked meals each week, you may decide to set up a meal plan, shop each Saturday morning, and meal prep on Sundays at 2:00 PM for the following week. Progress can be measured by putting a star on your meal prep calendar for each meal prepared.

"Slow, steady progress is better than daily excuses." Robin Sharma

Step 5: Stay Focused. It is easy to get distracted. Post your goal, the "why," your plan, and monitor in a place where you will see it each day. There will be challenging times. Don't give up. Recommit, refocus, pick yourself up and get back at it. Breaking through these challenges is how we move forward and improve our lives.



Step by step, form better habits that allow you to become the person you want to be.