

# Are You On Track With Your Resolutions?

Perhaps you rang in the New Year resolving to start and stick with an exercise program—or to stop smoking. But here you are two months later, and neither your scale nor smoking habit has budged.

You're not alone. A classic study on resolutions found that half of all people who set a New Year's resolution will throw in the towel within three months. But that doesn't have to be your story. If you're ready to turn your resolution into reality, ask yourself the five questions below—and then follow the tips to jump-start your plan.

1

Is my resolution too vague?

The secret to your future is hidden in your daily routine. Experts agree that the key to successful, long-term change is to set specific short-term goals. **Try this:** Clarify your intention. *Old resolution:* Get in shape. *New resolution:* Take a yoga class Monday and Wednesday. Walk for an hour Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.



2

Do I have a support system?

Multiple studies on change show that getting others involved can help keep you focused and feeling motivated. **Try this:** Stay inspired by connecting with co-workers or family members who have accomplished what you're trying to achieve. Ask a friend to check in with you once a week. Find a partner to join you for your daily workout.



3

Am I too hard on myself?

A slight shift in attitude might be all it takes to tip the scale. Research suggests that perfectionists struggle more to reach personal goals and are least likely to follow through on resolutions. **Try this:** When you slip up, don't punish yourself. Use a reward system instead: If you follow your workout plan for 10 days straight, you earn a massage.



4

Am I enjoying this?

Consider whether your efforts are actually creating pleasure or meaning in your life. If they're not, change your approach. **Try this:** Think of all the ways you can move closer to your goal; then pick the ones you like best and make them a habit. Take a dance class, go on scenic bike rides or start a healthy-eating dinner club.



5

Should I keep a journal?

Research suggests that people who write down their goals are more likely to achieve them. **Try this:** Write down your aspiration and why it's important to you. Include your true feelings and priorities. Review these often, so you can keep your eye on the prize—and celebrate your progress along the way.

## Help Staying On Track

For health information that matters to you, visit [MyLifeStages.org](http://MyLifeStages.org).