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Advantage EAP offers expanded hours in the New River Valley!!!

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How to Help Make this Year Different



The New Year's holiday has come and gone, but that doesn't mean that your resolutions have to do so as well. Millions of American make resolutions to make this year better than the last, but how realistic is it to keep those resolutions? According to a recent article, "of the 40-45% of people who make New Year's resolutions or goals, only 75% are able to keep their resolutions past the first week".¹ So how can you keep your motivation? This article will help you with ideas of how to actually keep your resolutions, as well as a better understanding why it may be so hard to do so.

Why Can't I Keep my Resolutions²?

One main reason that many people may not keep their resolutions has to do with the fact that many people only focus on the negatives and their downfalls. A study conducted at the University of Hertfordshire in England found that 78% of people who failed at keeping their resolutions only focus on not achieving their goals³. Focusing on the positive aspects of change, no matter how small, will help to keep motivation on achieving your resolutions. Also, setting small, more realistic goals will help in achieving positive change.

Setting a Goal is a Large Step Towards Change²

Actually setting a goal is more effective than not. "Those who make resolutions are still 10 times more likely to successfully change their behavior than those who do not" (Sadic F. Dingfelder, *Monitor on Psychology*, January 2004, Vol. 35, No.1). To help be even more effective, have a journal or place to write your goals down; this will help even more with accountability of achieving your goals. You may also want to write down your feelings on your way towards changing your habits and meeting your New Year's resolutions.

How to Keep your New Year's Resolutions⁴

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Nights and weekends call
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Advantage EAP does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned

The following offers some ideas on how to maintain your New Year's resolutions. Keeping these tips in mind may be helpful in trying to break those negative patterns, and making positive changes towards achieving your New Year's resolutions.



- **Set Reasonable Goals:** Rather than setting too large of a goal, set a smaller more realistic goal which will help you to not only keep your motivation, but also helps you to reach a realistic change in your life you have been wanting. For example, instead of setting a 50 pound weight-loss goal, first set a 10 pound goal. Once you reach that goal, the motivation will help you to continue on your weight-loss plan.
- **Share your Goals:** Sharing with a supportive loved one or partner of your resolutions will help you to have more accountability. If you keep your resolutions to yourself, when you falter, you are more likely to give up on yourself; but with the help of a supportive partner you will more likely maintain the change.
- **Allow for Faltering:** Thinking you will automatically make a change without faltering will more than likely disappoint you and you may quickly fall back into old patterns; but keeping in mind that setbacks may happen will help you to overcome the challenges. Setbacks may actually be helpful in recognizing growth, and in helping to realize what triggers you may need to avoid. Setbacks don't mean that failure is the only option.
- **Get to the Root Cause:** Discover the reasons why your bad habits occur. If you use food as a comfort, discover and uncover what is making your life uncomfortable and why it's easier to deal with for food. By being able to recognize the root of your issues you are more likely to be able to replace a negative habit with a positive one in the future.
- **Replace a negative, with a positive:** Once you recognize the root of your negative habits, replace them with a positive. When you have a craving for a cigarette, replace it with another stress-reliever, such as walking or yoga. Not every tip will work for each individual, so finding what works for you is important!

January has the power to bring about great change, so by setting goals and using a variety of strategies you **CAN** achieve your New Year's resolutions!



Advantage EAP is a benefit provided by your employer. There are counselors with Advantage EAP who have the training and experience to help with a variety of issues.

Please contact your Advantage EAP at:

(540) 989-6605 or 800-699-9396

Or visit our website at: www.psychhealthroanoke.com

Or our Blog at: <http://psychhealthroanoke.blogspot.com/>

Resources:

- 1) Hardy, Jack G. *The Miami Herald*. "New Year's Resolutions are Useful, Even When They Fail". January 4, 2010
- 2) New Year's Resolutions May be Hard to Keep:
<http://www.suite101.com/content/new-years-resolutions-hard-to-keep-a185460>
- 3) Sample, Ian. *The Guardian*. "New Year's Resolutions Doomed to Failure, Say Psychologists". December 28, 2009.
- 4) How to Keep a New Year's Resolution:
<http://www.suite101.com/content/new-years-resolutions-tips-on-keeping-a-new-years-resolution-a320314>