

# Wellness Bulletin

January 2021



## Psychological Strategies That Can Help You Stick to Your Goals

The start of a new year is the perfect time to turn a new page, which is probably why so many people make New Year's resolutions. The new year often feels like a fresh start and a great opportunity to change bad habits and establish new routines that will help you grow psychologically, emotionally, socially, physically, or intellectually. Of course, resolutions are much easier to make than to keep, and by the end of March, many of us have abandoned our resolve and settled back into our old patterns.<sup>1</sup>

### Why We Make Resolutions

In one study, only around 12% of people who make New Year's resolutions felt that they were successful in achieving their goals.

Some of the most common resolutions include losing weight, sticking to a healthier diet, exercising regularly, making better financial choices, quitting smoking, and spending more time with family. While many people feel that they don't necessarily achieve their resolution goals, there is some good news.

According to one study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, those who set New Year's resolutions are 10 times more likely to actually change their behavior than people who don't make these yearly goals.

Why do millions of people resolve to change at the beginning of every year? A series of studies into what researchers have dubbed the "fresh start effect" has looked at how temporal landmarks can motivate aspirational behaviors.

The new year feels like a new beginning, which is why so many people often set lofty resolutions during these times. While this practice can sometimes lead people to bite off more than they can chew, going after resolutions can also present great opportunities to overcome struggles with willpower, determination, and ingenuity.

So, what can you do to make it more likely that you will keep your next resolution? The following tips may help you beat the odds. [Make Your Health Goals S.M.A.R.T.](#)

<b>S</b> Specific	<b>M</b> Measurable	<b>A</b> Attainable	<b>R</b> Realistic	<b>T</b> Time-bound
<b>Do:</b> Set real numbers with real deadlines. <b>Don't:</b> Say, "I want more visitors."	<b>Do:</b> Make sure your goal is trackable. <b>Don't:</b> Hide behind buzzwords like, "brand engagement," or, "social influence."	<b>Do:</b> Work towards a goal that is challenging, but possible. <b>Don't:</b> Try to take over the world in one night.	<b>Do:</b> Be honest with yourself - you know what you and your team are capable of. <b>Don't:</b> Forget any hurdles you may have to overcome.	<b>Do:</b> Give yourself a deadline. <b>Don't:</b> Keep pushing towards a goal you might hit, "some day."

## Choose a Specific Goal

Every year, millions of adults resolve to "lose weight," "be more productive," or "get in shape" during the next year.<sup>1</sup> Instead of selecting such an ambiguous goal, focus on something more concrete that you can realistically set your sights on. In other words, choose a very specific, achievable goal. For example, you might commit to losing 10 pounds, making daily to-do lists, or running a mini-marathon. Be sure to make your goal realistic rather than drastic. Choosing a concrete, achievable goal also gives you the opportunity to plan exactly how you are going to accomplish (and stick to) your goal over the course of the year. [What Is Self-Determination?](#)

## Limit Your Resolutions

While you might have a long list of potential New Year's resolutions, Richard Wiseman, a professor of psychology at Hertfordshire University, suggests that you pick just one and focus your energies on it rather than spreading yourself too thin among a number of different objectives.

## Focus on One Goal at a Time

Achieving even one small goal can boost your belief in yourself. For larger goals, consider breaking them apart into manageable chunks to work on one at a time. The American Psychological Association (APA) also suggests focusing on just one behavior at a time is more likely to lead to long-term success.

Taking on too much all at once can be daunting. It can be particularly difficult because establishing new behavioral patterns takes time and sustained effort. Focusing yourself on one specific goal makes keeping a resolution much more achievable. [Single-Tasking Can Increase Productivity](#)

## Put Time Into Planning

Don't wait until the last minute to choose your goal. Picking your resolution wisely and putting in extensive planning are essential parts of achieving any goal. Experts suggest that you brainstorm how you will tackle a major behavior change, including the steps you will take, why you want to do it, and ways you can keep yourself on track.

## Make a Detailed Plan

Creating a detailed written plan can help you stick to your goal. Why is this stage so critical for success? For one thing, it allows you to consider what tactics you will use when you're faced with challenges. When things get difficult, what strategies will you use to stay on the path toward making your resolution a reality?

If you start working toward a goal without any type of plan in place, you may quickly find yourself giving up when faced with any sort of obstacle, setback, or resistance. For example, if your goal is to run three times per week, what will you do if you've missed four days in a row, and how will you proceed if you need to take time off for an illness or injury?

You can start by writing down your goal, making a list of things you might do to achieve that goal, and noting any obstacles that might stand in your way. By knowing exactly what you want to accomplish and the difficulties you might face, you'll be better prepared to stick to your resolution and overcome anything that might sidetrack you. [Self-Improvement Goal Setting Tips](#)

Those unhealthy or undesired habits that you are trying to change probably took years to develop, so how can you expect to change them in just a matter of days, weeks, or months? Be patient with yourself. Understand that working toward your resolution is a process. Even if you make a misstep or two, you can restart and continue on your journey towards your goal.

**Focus on  
your goal.**

**Don't look  
in any  
direction  
but ahead.**

It may take longer than you would like to achieve your goals,<sup>7</sup> but remember that this is not a race to the finish. Once you have made the commitment to changing a behavior, it may be something that you continue to work on for the rest of your life. [Simple Tips for Achieving Goals](#)

### Start With Small Steps

Taking on too much too quickly is a common reason why so many New Year's resolutions fail. Starting an unsustainably restrictive diet, overdoing it at the gym, or radically altering your normal behavior are surefire ways to derail your plans. Instead, focus on taking tiny steps that will ultimately help you reach your larger goal.

#### Small Steps Lead to Success

If you have resolved to run a marathon, start out by going for a jog two or three times a week. Slowly, work up to longer runs and exercising more days per week.

If you are trying to eat healthier, start by replacing some of your favorite less healthy foods with more nutritious foods. Then, tackle another element of your diet, such as adding in a greater variety of vegetables, reducing portion size, and/or cutting back on fried food or eating out.

SMALL  
Steps  
LEAD TO BIG  
Changes



While it may seem like a slow start, these small incremental changes make it easier to stick to your new healthy habits and increase the likelihood of long-term success.

### Avoid Repeating Past Failures

Another strategy for keeping your New Year's resolution is to not make the exact same resolution year after year. "If people think they can do it, they probably can, but if they've already tried and failed, their self-belief will be low," explained Wiseman in an interview with The Guardian.

If you do choose to reach for the same goals you've tried for in the past, spend some time evaluating your previous results. Which strategies were the most effective? Which were the least effective? What has prevented you from keeping your resolution in past years?

Consider altering your resolution slightly to make it more feasible. By changing your approach, you will be more likely to see real results this year. Remember That Change Is a Process.

### Get Support

Yes, you've probably heard this advice a million times, but that is because the buddy system actually works. Having a solid support system can help you stay motivated and accountable. Camaraderie makes sticking to your resolution more fun, too. So, ideally, find a like-minded pal or loved one to join you in your goal. Explain what your goals are to your close friends or family and ask them to help you achieve your objectives. Better yet, enlist the help of others by joining a group that shares your goal.

### Renew Your Motivation

During the first days of a New Year's resolution, you will probably feel confident and highly motivated to reach your goal. Because you haven't really faced any discomfort or temptation associated with changing your behavior, making this change might seem all too easy.

Surround  
yourself with  
people who  
support and  
encourage your  
goals.

After dealing with the reality of dragging yourself to the gym at 6 a.m. or gritting your teeth through headaches brought on by nicotine withdrawal, your motivation to keep your New Year's resolution may start to dwindle.

When you face such moments, remind yourself exactly why you are doing this. Think about (or write a list to keep handy) what do you have to gain by achieving your goal. Finding sources of inspiration can keep you going when times get tough.

### Keep Working on Your Goals

By March, many people have lost that initial spark of motivation that they had in January. Keep that inspiration alive by continuing to work on your goals, even after facing setbacks. If your current approach is not working, reevaluate your strategies, and develop a new plan. Being flexible with your plan—and even your end goal—will help you be successful.

### Keep a Resolution Journal

Consider keeping a resolution journal, where you can write about your successes and struggles. Write down the reasons *why* you are working toward your goal so that you can refer to them during times when you feel uninspired and unmotivated. Think about what is causing you to falter (such as stress from work or home life) and how to cope effectively.

By sticking with it and working on your goal all year long, you can be one of the few able to say that you really did keep your New Year's resolution—and if you're writing down your progress and strategies, you'll have ready proof of your efforts if you're ever feeling like giving up. **Make Lasting Life Changes**

### Learn and Adapt

Encountering a setback is one of the most common reasons why people give up on their New Year's resolutions. If you suddenly relapse into a bad habit, don't view it as a failure. The path toward your goal is not always a straight one, and there will often be challenges along the way.<sup>7</sup> Instead, view relapses as learning opportunities.

If you are keeping a resolution journal, write down important information about when the relapse occurred, what might have triggered it, and what you might do differently next time. By understanding the challenges you face, you will be better prepared to deal with them in the future.

### A Word From Verywell

The yearly ritual of resolution setting doesn't have to be an annual disappointment. Sometimes, the difference between success and failure is simply choosing the right goal and the process you use to go about achieving it. Most importantly, remember to be kind and flexible with yourself and to celebrate any and all progress along the way. It's not just the end goal that matters—it's the journey along the way.

(Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-keep-your-new-years-resolutions-2795719>)

**A LITTLE  
PROGRESS  
EACH  
DAY  
ADDS UP  
TO BIG  
RESULTS**





## Healthy Recipe: Pistachio Oat Bars

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup raw shelled pistachios
- 1 cup whole rolled oats\*
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ cup maple syrup, more for drizzling on top
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ⅓ cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- additional handful of chopped pistachios for the topping

### Pistachio Oat Bars Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and line an 8-inch square pan with parchment paper. In a food processor with the S blade attached, process the pistachios, oats, and salt for about 30 seconds, until a meal starts to form. Drizzle in the maple syrup and olive oil while the motor is still running and the meal begins

Press the dough evenly into the pan and cover it with coconut flakes and remaining pistachios. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until the coconut is nice and golden brown and the dough is cooked through. You want the squares to still be a little soft - don't overbake these.

Carefully lift the cooled dough out of the pan by holding two sides of the parchment paper. Cut it into squares. Drizzle a little maple syrup over the top for extra sweetness, if you like. Store the squares in a sealed container for up to a week. (Source <https://www.loveandlemons.com/jessicas-pistachio-oat-squares/>)



## Employee Spotlight

**Employee Name:** Beth Rhoads

**Job Title:** Director of Health Integration

**Program:** TCM & CCBHC Project Manager

**Location:** Waite Park

**Q: When you reward yourself, what is your go to reward?**

A: Pizza

**Q: Why I work at CMMHC?**

A: Passion

**Q: What is your favorite self-care activity? How do you implement this in your busy life? How does this help you with your wellness?**

A: Pet and walk my dogs

**Q: What makes you laugh?**

A: silly things myself and other humans do



