

Making New Year's resolutions that last

December 30 2016



(HealthDay)—Though made with the best of intentions, most New Year's resolutions last about as long as the bubbles in leftover champagne.

That's why experts from the American Psychological Association (APA) suggest planning manageable positive lifestyle changes for the new year instead of major life overhauls that set you up for disappointment.

"Setting small, attainable [goals](#) throughout the year—instead of a singular, overwhelming goal on January 1—can help you reach whatever it is you strive for," psychologist Lynn Bufka said in an APA news release.

"Remember, it is not the extent of the change that matters, but rather the act of recognizing that [lifestyle change](#) is important and working toward it, one step at a time," she explained.

People who make realistic [resolutions](#) are more likely to keep those promises throughout the year. The APA offers some tips on how to set attainable goals:

- **Start small.** Make promises that you can keep. Rather than make a resolution to exercise every day, aim to get to the gym three days a week. Instead of overhauling your entire diet, try replacing sugary treats with healthier options, like fruit.
- **Take a gradual approach.** Making lifestyle changes may take time. Don't expect miracles overnight. Try replacing one unhealthy behavior at a time.
- **Don't go it alone.** Talking about your resolutions and finding support can help you reach your goals. Try forming a group or take a class with others who have common goals. Having support and being able to talk about your struggles can make sticking to your resolutions less overwhelming.
- **Give yourself a break.** No matter how hard people try, no one achieves perfection. Don't give up on your resolutions if you make a mistake or have a setback. Move beyond your slip-up and get back on track.

- **Ask for help.** If you feel like you need help to achieve your goal, seek the support of a health care professional. Psychologists are trained to understand the connection between the mind and body. They can help you find strategies that will make your goals more attainable and help you cope with challenges, including [unhealthy behaviors](#), stress and emotional issues.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers more tips for a [healthy new year](#).

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Citation: Making New Year's resolutions that last (2016, December 30) retrieved 20 November 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-12-year-resolutions.html>

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