



# Setting – and Keeping – HEALTH GOALS



With the new year comes the chance to review our habits and hopes, and how they stack up against our health. It is a time to keep what makes us feel best and rework what does not, to set goals that align with our priorities. Here's how.

## 1. Connect with yourself.

To set goals you can actually achieve, they should line up with what is most important to you. Start by answering the questions below.

- What is most important to me physically? Emotionally?
- Fill in the blank: I wish I \_\_\_\_\_
- What gives me joy?
- What are my greatest stressors?

## 2. Set your intentions.

Using the information above, choose three health goals for the new year.

**For each, ask yourself:**

- Is it specific?
- Is it measurable?
- Is it attainable?
- Does it align with what is most important to me?
- What is my time frame for achieving the goal?

### Make your goals **SMART**

**S**pecific and well-defined

**M**easurable so you know how you are doing

**A**ttainable and achievable based on your life, access to resources and skills

**R**elevant and important to you and what you want from life

**T**ime-bound to set a reasonable deadline to reach goals

**For example,** a goal might be to trade those hours of streaming online for cooking a healthy meal with your family once a week, with everyone helping with meal prep. You satisfy your emotional priorities by spending time with your family while doing something that brings you joy. This supports your aim to lower your blood pressure with healthy eating. You also take the edge off the stress that may be elevating your blood pressure by balancing the time you must be away with quality time at home.

Your responses may not fit as neatly into a goal as they do in this example, but it gives you an idea how they can weave together.



### 3. Stick with it.

Most goals, especially resolutions set for the new year, are distant memories by February. Here are a few tips to help you stick with your goals:

- **Keep your “why” top of mind.** If your goal is truly tied to what’s most important to you, you will be more successful staying with it. Post your goals on the fridge or somewhere you will see them every day.
- **Start small and break your goals into manageable chunks.** For example, if you want to lose 10 pounds, approach your goal a meal at a time and set realistic weight loss targets by week or month.
- **Anticipate obstacles.** Write them down, think through solutions so that you can eliminate road-blocks before they appear. For example, if you know your weekdays are too busy for the healthy meal prep you need to hit your weight loss goal, devote time on Sundays to shopping, cooking and organizing meals for the week. If you cannot find time to exercise during the day, go to bed earlier and give yourself a morning workout in the time you gain.
- **Celebrate your successes.**

