



Start Today By Making a Ripple Effect on Your Life!

"Tips for Changing Your Health Habits"

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A new year is finally here and now you are looking at things that you want to change in life for the better. You are hoping to make these changes into a health habits but you are trying to find out how can you do this. The first thing you want to ask yourself what are health habits?

Health habits are the ways that you eat, exercise, and take care of yourself. Habits are never easy to change. You will not be able to change them overnight-- no matter how much willpower you have. But, you CAN make changes in your life. First you need to choose what you want to change.

What are ways to change these habits?

Listed on this page are some tips on ways to make changes. These tips are from people who have made changes in their habits and from people who study how changes are made. Some hints for making changes are:

- ✓ Make a plan for change. Select a goal and then break it down into small, easy to do steps. It's easy to get discouraged and feel like you aren't making any progress if you select only big goals. For example, if your goal is to walk a mile every day, start by walking 2 or 3 blocks three times a week. Add to how far you walk as time goes on.
- ✓ Start by adding one new habit. It is easier to add a new habit than to break one that you already have. For example, start an exercise program before you try to stop smoking.

- ✓ Write down your new habits. Records, such as food diaries and weight charts, can help you see how well you are doing.
- ✓ Make it easy to remember your new habits. For example, if it's hard for you to remember to take your pills before breakfast, put the bottle on the kitchen table or by the alarm clock.
- ✓ Start with the habit that is easiest for you to change. Success will help you feel that you **can** make changes.
- ✓ Get rid of reminders of habits you want to break. If you want to stop smoking, get rid of all your ash trays.
- ✓ Ask for help from your family and friends. Tell them **how** they can be most helpful to you.
- ✓ Write a contract or an agreement with your family or healthcare giver about new habits you want to make.
- ✓ Reward yourself when you make progress. Treat yourself to something you enjoy when you reach each step toward your larger goal. A reward could be taking time to do something you enjoy such as reading a good book, or doing a hobby. This isn't childish, but is a good way to change habits.

If you have a hard time making changes no matter how hard you try, it could be that your goal is too big. Or, maybe the reward you will get for making the change isn't big enough. You might be trying to do too much at one time. Don't try to run a race before you walk a mile! Don't give up--- think about your goals. Try a new plan to reach them.

If you have a day when you don't meet your goals, try not to be let down. Think about what went wrong and try again the next day.

Changing your health habits does not happen all at once. By using these ideas, you can start some habits for a healthier life.

Want to learn more about changing habits? Then sign up for the Changing Habits group session. Dates and times will be posted for availability. Click [here](#) for details.