

# One Small Change at a Time

Use these tips to help you refocus and recommit to your goals.

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## Topic of the Week



It doesn't matter how old we are; the back-to-school feeling is never too far away at this time of year. The entire family is returning to routines and schedules. When motivation is running high, it can be a great time to make some changes to your eating and exercise behaviors. Take advantage of September's "fresh start" feeling. Set a few realistic and specific mini goals to help make healthy habits stick before the three big food holidays arrive. These tips and strategies can help you get on the right track.

### **Establish a clear date**

The first thing to do is decide on a deadline. Maybe you want to lose 10 pounds before the holidays or for an upcoming event, for instance (keep in mind that on the **POINTSPLUS**<sup>®</sup> program, you can expect to lose .5 to 2 pounds per week). Or you can link your goal to a fitness event you plan to participate in, such as a 5K walk or run. If you don't have any existing "built-in" deadlines, now's the time to think of one.

### **Get a calendar — and set reminders**

Make it visual. Use color-coding or fun stickers to mark milestones (or mini-deadlines) along the way. Hang the calendar on a wall in a spot where you'll see it often (like in the kitchen or by the front door), or place it prominently on your desk. Prefer digital reminders? Build them into your cell phone calendar or even set up reminders in your work computer calendar. Include small tasks that will help you reach your goal, so at the end of each day you can have the satisfaction of crossing them off!

### **Surround yourself with encouragement**

Let important people in your life know you're making a change for the better. Let them know how they can keep you on track with positive words and reassurances if you hit a bump in the road. Share your goal with your Leader. Find a fitness buddy. And reach out to other meeting members who are also working on short-term goals.

**Reward yourself — along the way and at the end**

Every step you take in the right direction (going for a run, making a smart food choice in a tempting situation) should be acknowledged. Don't forget to celebrate more "official" milestones as well, like reaching your 5% weight-loss goal. Take a tip from preschoolers everywhere and set up a sticker chart, awarding yourself a gold star for even the simplest victories and achievements. It also can't hurt to have a clear reward in mind when you reach your goal, even if it's tied to the goal itself (such as fitting into a smaller clothing size: you can splurge on a new outfit).

**Know how to regroup when you hit a rough patch**

The best way to make sure a bump in the road doesn't turn into a huge detour is to arm yourself with coping strategies ahead of time.

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