

9 Tips for Developing Better Habits



More than half of adults make New Year's resolutions each year. Unfortunately, many give up after a few weeks because they haven't turned their goals into habits. Whether you want to lose weight, save for a home or eat more vegetables, adopting good habits is sure to help you reach your goals. Here are a few tips to help keep you on track this year:



1. Get motivated.

Why do you want to adopt the habit? How will your life improve once you develop this habit? What will happen if you don't? These three questions will help you streamline your goal and maintain motivation when you need it the most. If you're a visual person, write down your answers and post them where you'll read them daily.

2. Start small.

Lasting habits take time to develop. Start by setting small goals that will eventually lead you to accomplishing your end result. By focusing on manageable changes at the beginning of your transformation, habits are more likely to become automatic.

3. Set reminders.

It's easy to fall off track when you're in the process of adopting a new habit. Consistency is key, and setting a reminder will help you build good habits.

4. Replace a bad habit.

If you want to kick a bad habit, it helps to replace it with a better one. Trying to quit eating sugary snacks? Keep carrot sticks or nuts nearby so when the urge to snack hits, you're less tempted to reach for candy or other sugary treats.

5. Get others on board.

Tell people about the habit you're trying to adopt. The more people you tell, the more accountable you'll feel. And who knows? They may even become inspired to adopt a new habit themselves.

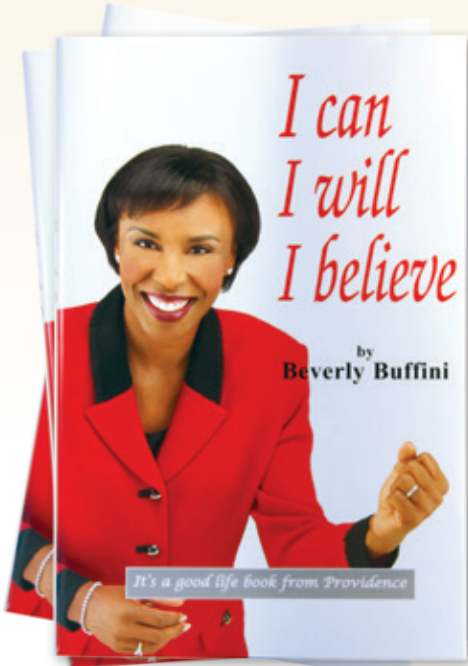


6. Have realistic expectations.

Changes don't happen overnight—they happen over several weeks and months of consistent action. Remember that achieving results only comes when you create consistency.

7. Do it for 30 days.

Studies show it takes 30 days to form a habit. Stay committed to your habit for a full 30 days. If it hasn't become automatic by then, try to pinpoint the challenges you're experiencing so you can try again.



8. Take on one habit at a time.

Although you may feel motivated to revamp your life and change several habits at once, doing so may prevent you from adopting any of them. Focus on one good habit at a time. Once it becomes routine, take on another new habit.

9. Reward yourself for a job well-done!

A small reward will keep you motivated, especially on days when it's tough to stay on track. Think about how you'll reward yourself ahead of time so you have something to look forward to.

*Source: Psychology Today, Dec 31, 2009

Avoid these roadblocks to stay on track

- **You've lost motivation.** Remember your original intention for wanting to adopt the habit. Keep an inspirational quote or photo nearby to reignite your fire when you need it the most.
- **You missed a few days due to an illness or travel.** Don't let missing a day or two derail you. Instead, try again the next day, or as soon as you are able. You only fail when you fall off track and stay there.
- **Negative thoughts.** Silence your inner critic by surrounding yourself with positivity. Read inspiring books, listen to upbeat music and seek out encouraging people.

