



Motivation Resource Guide

Motivation

Motivation is an inner drive to act or behave in a certain way. Different things such as wishes, desires and goals activate us to move us in a certain direction or behavior. Motivation can come from many places and have different effects on us.

External Motivators

While these can lead to change, they tend to have less impact on long-term change or success. These are often outside influences such as being forced to do something related to a work incentive program or a partner or family member wanting us to change. Examples can be being recognized with praise, a compliment or a trophy. Saving money can also be a motivator for a behavior.

Internal Motivators

These tend to have more impact on long-term change or success. They are often inside influences such as being a good role model for our children, or having pride in our accomplishments. Examples can be feeling better, having more energy and having more control over our decisions.

Getting Motivated

Get Inspired

Look for a role model or find someone who has already achieved a similar goal to yours and ask for advice. Finding someone who has achieved the goal can make it seem much more possible for you to achieve it. Ask this person for tips and suggestions. Gather as much information as you can on the topic. Read books, magazines, or blogs or watch YouTube videos. The more knowledge you have, the more prepared you are. Look for inspiration in your role models, family, or even your favorite celebrity.

Create Awareness

We often go through our busy days with little time for reflection. Set time for reflection each day to create some awareness around your thoughts, attitudes and daily behaviors. Keep a calendar for important milestones, dates and goals. Make them just as important as other tasks during your day. Create an inspiration board with inspiring quotes and pictures. Have pictures of things that will help get you to your goal. If you are trying to lose weight have pictures of healthy foods that you like, gym shoes or a dress that you are aiming to wear again.

A Positive State of Mind

Identify negative self-talk and replace it with positive affirmations. Often we don't even realize that self-talk occurs. Be sure to curb negative thoughts and replace them with positive affirmations. "I can find physical activity that I do enjoy doing," instead of, "I don't like exercise." Think about the benefits and rewards of achieving the goal. Pull from your list of intrinsic motivators to help with forming these positive affirmations. "Walking is good exercise and is good for my body." Get excited about your progress. "Wow, I started off walking only a few blocks, and now I walk two miles." Visualize yourself achieving the goal. See yourself as a non-smoker instead of a smoker. See yourself preparing healthy meals for lunch instead of purchasing fast-food. Find something positive or fun about the goal you are approaching. Sign up for a 5k that has a fun theme. Take dance or cooking classes. Buy something fun with money saved from quitting smoking.

Seek Support

Start with those who are closest to you, such as family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Talk with family members about doing healthy activities together, ask friends to check in on you, ask a neighbor to go walking and recruit co-workers who want to have healthy lunches with you. The people or groups you associate with often determine the type of person you become. For people who want improved health, association with other healthy people is the fastest and strongest path towards positive changes.

Research shows that over time you develop the eating habits, health habits and other habits of those around you. Look for support through online groups, local community groups and workplace wellness programs. Find groups in your areas such as walking groups or quitting smoking meetings. If you can't find a support group in your area, start one yourself! Sometimes you may benefit from professional support. A family physician, EAP counselor, quit-smoking coach, personal trainer or registered dietitian can be great sources of support.

Getting Started

First, ask yourself a few questions:

- Will I continue to do what I have always done and stay stuck, or will I take my life back and do the things I want to do?
- Do I want to be able to have the health and energy to be able fulfill my dreams without being held back by my health?
- What are the benefits of making changes?
- What are the benefits of not making changes?

Step 1: Make a commitment

Making the decision to change your lifestyle and work on improving health is a big step. A good way to start is to make a commitment to yourself and write it down. Some people find it beneficial to write out a contract for themselves and to sign it. Write out what you intend to do, as well as why you want to make these changes.

Step 2: Recognize your starting point

Take time to reflect on your current lifestyle. After you have identified what you want to change, begin looking at parts of your current lifestyle that could pose as potential roadblocks to your success, and think about ways you can overcome these challenges.

Step 3: Set realistic goals

Small changes can lead to big results in the long run, but keeping your goals realistic is very important. Striving to lose 40 pounds by the end of the month is not going to be realistic and will leave you feeling frustrated and discouraged. It is important to have a long-term goal, such as losing 40 pounds, but it is also important to have short-term goals along the way, such as losing 1-2 pounds per week. Using the goal-setting method known as setting SMART goals is a great way to make sure your goals are inline with helping you achieve success.

Step 4: Identify sources of support

Look for people who may have a similar interest in making the same lifestyle changes. If you have friends, neighbors, family members or co-workers who are interested in losing weight or quitting tobacco, talk with them and discuss setting up some goals together. Having someone with you on this journey to talk to and rely on for support goes a long way. Having someone to go walking with, attend an exercise class with or share healthy recipes with can keep you motivated to keep going.

Step 5: Monitor your progress

It is important to check in with yourself and evaluate your progress regularly. Evaluate which parts of your plan are working well and which ones may need a little tweaking, and re-write your goals accordingly. If you are consistently achieving a goal, then it may be time to add a new goal in order to continue your success! Be sure to reward yourself for achieving your goals!

Goal Setting Work Sheet: S.M.A.R.T. Goals

My short-term goal:

Specific:

Measurable:

Attainable:

Realistic:

Timely:

Barriers:

Solutions:

Short-term benchmarks:

Date I will achieve:

My long-term goal:

Specific:

Measurable:

Attainable:

Realistic:

Timely:

Barriers:

Solutions:

Long-term benchmarks:

Date I will achieve:

Overcoming Barriers and Obstacles

Life never goes exactly as planned. We can be on track with good habits and routines and then easily get side-tracked by something. Things that come up and get in the way of us making progress and reaching our goals are often referred to as barriers or obstacles. We can't always predict or avoid them, but there are some things we can do.

Common barriers and obstacles

Things that often come in regards to health and wellness are having old habits, family/ social influences, stress, limited time, limited resources, and many others.

Considering the past

What kinds of things have gotten in the way of my success in the past? For example: I tend to smoke more when I am drinking. Or, I tend to snack more when I skip breakfast.

Troubleshooting the obvious

Consider things that are coming up. For example: I have a long road trip for work this week and I typically smoke more when I drive. Or, this weekend I have a party to attend and I know there will be lots of unhealthy foods there.

Find a way around roadblocks

Have a plan for any anticipated roadblocks. I will have my co-worker drive so I am unable to smoke on the road trip. Or, I will eat before I go to the party and chew gum while I am there so I am not as tempted by all of the food.

Maintaining Goals and Lifestyle Changes

Tips:

- Put your goals in writing to avoid being vague
- List the benefits of achieving your goal
- Make each step challenging but achievable
- Get prepared and organized

Make a plan

Write out your plan and use it as your guide. Remember to use your SMART goals. Don't think of change as a resolution, such a New Year's resolution, think of this as an adventure or your evolution into the new you. Post your plan somewhere where you will see it often so it can be a continual reminder. Once your plan is complete, review it and ask yourself if you are confident that these changes are realistic. If not, start smaller.

Focus on one change at a time

Behavior change is not easy and it takes time. Unhealthy habits generally develop over the course of time, and likewise new and healthy behaviors require time before they are ingrained as part of your new normal. When health goals fail, it is normally because one is trying to take on too much too quickly. Success increases when we focus on one single change at a time. Once you feel like your initial goal has become consistent, you are then at a point where you can begin building on that goal, or add another goal that works toward the change you are striving for.

Team up

Having someone to share your successes and struggles with can make this behavior change process easier and less intimidating. Involving a buddy, whether a friend, family member or co-worker, will help keep you accountable and increase motivation. Talk about what you are doing with the people you are around frequently, and see if anyone wants to go walking or to the gym with you, or see who may also be interested in quitting tobacco. There are many online support groups available as well.

Start small

Once you have your long-term and short-term goals written down, break them down into small, and manageable steps. If you have a long-term goal of losing 20 pounds in the next 5 months, looking ahead at a small weekly goal of losing 1 pound per week seems much more manageable. If your goal is to improve nutrition, starting with a small goal of replacing after-dinner desert with something healthy like fruit or yogurt may be a good first step. By the end of the week, you'll feel successful in knowing that you met your goal, which builds even more motivation!

Don't be afraid to ask for help

Accepting help from those who care about you and will listen strengthens your resilience and commitment. If you are feeling overwhelmed or unable to meet your goals on your own, talk with a friend or a family member to gather their insight; friends and family typically know us best. Seek out professional help from a personal trainer, registered dietitian, quit-smoking coach or a counselor to figure out what may be getting in the way of your success.

Remember that making changes takes time and commitment, and no one is perfect! Minor missteps along the way are completely normal. If they happen, be kind to yourself and get back on track as soon as possible.

Reward yourself for every successful step, not just the attainment of a long-term goal.

Try to think of treats that will reinforce a mind-body connection so you can savor the rewards of your hard work.

Rewards are a great way to sustain motivation. Have something set-up that you can look forward to.

- Try to have rewards even for reaching short-term goals.
 - For example reward yourself for every 5 or 10 pounds of weight loss or when you have been smoke-free for one month.
 - Purchase a new book or get a manicure and be sure to celebrate your achievements!



10 Ways to Keep Motivated

- Set short- and long-term goals. Make goals that are realistic and specific. “I will walk everyday” may be too ambiguous. “I will walk 15 minutes after lunch” is more specific and achievable.
- Schedule your goal in your daily planner or to-do list and make it a priority, as you would if you were scheduling an appointment or meeting a friend for coffee.
- Find a buddy to help keep you accountable. Making exercise a social activity will also make it more enjoyable.
- Maintain a journal or log. Use a calendar to track how much and how often you meet your goal. It will help you see how far you have come and how close you are to achieving your goals.
- Participate in a local fundraising event that is similar to your interests and goals (e.g., 5K walk or run). It will help the community and your health.
- Join a local biking or walking club. You will get fit and make friends who will help support you in your goals.
- Keep a work out bag or walking shoes in your office or car. You never know when you may have 30–60 minutes to walk at the park or beach.
- Reward yourself for meeting your goals. Treat yourself to a warm bubble bath or massage after a great work out.
- Focus on the benefits of your goal, e.g., having more energy, becoming stronger, relieving stress or strengthen your heart.
- Finally, write down any positives after exercise, such as being more focused, having a sense of well-being, being more relaxed, etc. In those moments you are not feeling motivated, you have something to inspire you.

Here when you need us.

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