



## GET AND STAY MOTIVATED TO LIVE HEALTHY

It's been lurking on your to-do list for, what, a year? Maybe longer? You know the one: "Lose weight" or "quit smoking" or "start eating healthy." Perhaps you've made some hearty attempts at tackling your healthy-living goals, but after a few weeks of trying, you get bored, fall off the wagon or feel defeated.

Following are some tips to help you squash those feelings of failure and attain and maintain healthy habits for life.

**Act first.** Don't wait to feel motivated to do something, just start doing the thing you want to do and your motivation will soar, said Dr. Simon Rego, director of Psychology Training at Montefiore Medical Center in New York.

**Start small.** "Small changes over time add up to big results," said Lisa Gatti, founder of CulinaryTherapyOnline.com. For example, if your goal is to run a marathon, start with a 5K race. If your goal is to lose 50 pounds, start with losing five. By breaking up big

goals into little ones, your efforts will be more rewarded along the way and your motivation will remain steady and strong.

**Think outside the box.** Art Markman, professor of psychology at the University of Texas at Austin and author of *Smart Change*, recommended entering into a commitment contract with someone. "Websites like StickK.com let you set up a behavior contract so that if you fail to keep up with your goal, you have to pay money to a partner," he explained. "To make it extra motivating, you can require your partner to donate the money to a charity you hate."

**Visualize it.** Steve Siebold, author of *Die Fat or Get Tough: 101 Differences in Thinking Between Fat People and Fit People*, advised creating a vision board filled with pictures of fit, sexy, healthy people and hanging it in a highly visible spot. "When you feel discouraged, feel like giving up, get the urge to eat bad or cheat on your diet, look at the vision board and get motivated," he said.

**Dress for success.** You want to work out. You've even got the exercise class schedule tacked to your bulletin board. But still you're not going. "Cute, new workout clothes may be just the motivation you need to get your exercise routine happening," said April Masini, author of the "Ask April" advice column.

**Make a choice ... every day.** "Everything we think, do, say and feel is the product of a choice," said John McGrail, PhD, and author of *The Synthesis Effect*. Based on that idea, staying motivated can hinge on one simple question: "Does this choice – thought, feeling, emotion or behavior – that I'm making or about to make, serve my growth, well-being and the greater good?" Honest answers bring intuitive guidance, he said, and with practice, "making consistently good choices will become quite automatic." ///