

# Health Improvement Strategy

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What** do I want to improve about my health and **why**?

My realistic goal for the next month is:

How important is this improvement to me? (1 = not important, 10 = extremely important)

1    2    3    4    5    6    **7**    8    9    10

**What I will do differently everyday this week is:** Be very specific - some questions to ask yourself (if applicable to your plan) include: **How** do I want to make my change? **What** specific behavior will I change? **When** will I carry out this change each day? **Where** might I do this? What amount of **time** will I set aside for this change?

**Week 1**

**Week 2**

**Week 3**

**Week 4**

Some things that could make it difficult to achieve my goal are:

My plan for overcoming these difficulties includes:

People/resources that will support me:

How confident am I that I can do this? (1 = not confident at all, 10 = very confident)

1    2    3    4    5    6    **7**    8    9    10

## Weekly Review

| Week  | Place a check in each box if you carried out your daily plan  | What I learned... |          |          |          |          |          |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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What I will do differently next week is:

Write down how you will change your plan during the next week in the boxes under "What I will do everyday this week is:"

# Guide to Improving Health Related Habits

Most of us have something that we want to improve or change about health. It might be that we want to lose weight or become more physically fit. Most of us have tried many times to change habits, but we just haven't been able to do it or to maintain it over the long haul. The following approach will help you learn to change your behavior one small step at a time.

## 1) Define your Aim

What do you want? What is your purpose? Do you want more energy? Do you want to feel better emotionally? Do you want better physical health?

## 2) Establish a Goal

After identifying the health improvement you would like to make, set a realistic achievable short-term goal. For example, if you want to increase your energy by losing weight, how much weight do you want to lose and by when? Get feedback from others when picking a strategy and establishing your goal.

## 3) Evaluate the Importance of your Improvement to You

Is this health improvement one that will really affect your life? How invested are you in carrying out this strategy? Do you think this improvement will make you feel better? Will this improvement have a positive impact on your life?

## 4) Specific Plan

Next decide specifically what you are going to do differently everyday to achieve your goal. Your plan should be as specific as possible by answering all of the following questions. As an example, let's use these questions to take a look at how we could plan a small step towards losing weight:

**a. How?** How do you want to go about losing weight? Do you want to exercise more to lose weight? Do you want to change what you are eating? **"I want to change what I eat."**

**b. What?** What foods do you want to change? What foods shouldn't you be eating? What size portion should you eat? **"I want to stop eating so many desserts."**

**c. When?** When do you want to stop eating so many desserts? **"I want to stop eating so many desserts after dinner in the evening".**

**d. Where?** Where do you want to limit your eating of desserts? **"I want to stop eating desserts when I'm eating dinner at home".**

**e. Frequency?** How frequently, how many times per week do you want to not eat desserts? **"I want to eat desserts after dinner only on Saturday and Sunday".**

## 5) Identify Barriers

To be most successful, think about what might sabotage your strategy. If you can identify those things that might get in the way, you can plan around them. Let's say your barrier is that on two nights of the week you have activities where food is always present. What can you do to prevent eating the desserts at those activities?

## 6) Plan to Overcome Barriers

What can you do to prevent eating desserts at those activities? Brainstorm - you can skip the meeting; you can go with a supportive individual; you can fill up on healthy food before you go; etc. Choose one of those ideas and try it.

## 7) Identify Supports

List the names of family, friends, community resources, etc. that you feel are important to include in your strategy to maximize success.

## 8) Evaluate your Confidence Level

Do you think you can really do this? If not, choose a different plan – eg maybe you should avoid desserts only three times/week instead of five? Ask yourself who can help you accomplish this goal.

Use the **Health Improvement Strategy** to help you improve your behavior.