

10

TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING THOSE NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

1 BE YOUR OWN THERAPIST

Why do you want to make this resolution? Really? A psychotherapist will help you to explore all the reasons why you want to make changes, including those that you may not be aware of, which way might work best for you and what has held you back so far. Write down every reason you can think of and see which ones chime with you the most. With greater self-understanding you'll choose the right changes to make and approach the process in the most positive and motivated way.

2 WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

When you really want to do something, you do it. So if you can plan your resolution so that you will enjoy the process, then you will do it with no trouble because you really want to do it. For example, if you enjoy drama and resolve to go to the theatre once a month, you're very likely to achieve that. Likewise, knowing that you are walking for 20 minutes a day because 'I like walking and want to feel the benefits that regular exercise gives me' will be a much more successful resolution than 'I ought to be fitter so I should try walking because at least I don't have to join a gym'.

3 DITCH THE WAGGING-FINGER WORDS

Imagine you were told that you must eat a slice of cake every day this year. Notice how cake suddenly doesn't seem so appealing. Avoid thoughts such as 'I must',

Making positive changes in your life can only be a good thing, so why do we find it so hard to make them happen? Psychotherapist Rachel Shattock Dawson of TherapyOnThames.co.uk has some timely tips



'I ought' and 'I should' and instead be guided by your real positive motivations, such as 'I want to take the course because I enjoy using my brain and learning new things'.

4 SET A DATE

Decide on one change and work towards it – 1 January is a great day for

new starts because the new year wipes the slate clean and it's a key, memorable date.

5 BE SPECIFIC

Rephrase your motivation into a specific target, spelling out the benefits. So, instead of thinking 'I really must lose some weight this year', say 'I want to lose a stone so that

I get back to a healthy BMI, look better in my clothes and feel better and fitter'.

6 HOW DO YOU EAT AN ELEPHANT?

Answer: in bite-sized chunks. If you're planning on making big changes, it's usually best to break the project down into clear, achievable steps. Be realistic about how much you will want to do, by when.

7 MAKE IT REAL

Write down your resolution and read it out loud, daily. It's good to tell friends and family what you're doing, so that they can support you.

8 MAKE IT A PRIORITY

Making change happen requires a plan and a consistent approach. Keep a notebook by your bed and check in on your progress last thing at night. Take it one day at a time and set any new targets on waking. Think, talk or read about it every day.

9 VISUALISE SUCCESS

Close your eyes and imagine yourself having achieved this change. What does the new you look like? How good do you feel? What else has changed? Decide now how you'll celebrate when you have achieved your goals.

10 TOGETHERNESS IS GOOD

Do you know anyone who would like to do it with you? 'Change buddies' make the process more fun and help boost flagging motivation. Or join a group to get some more ideas and peer support, whether it's a local club or an online forum.