Overcoming Obstacles to a Healthy Change

How can you or your loved one move from indecision, indifference, confusion, or frustration to making a commitment to a living a healthier lifestyle?

Each New Year, many of us try to set new health goals. For many, losing weight and exercising more top the list. Yet, many people don’t ever seem to get past the idea of improving their diet or fitness level. Perhaps you are willing and ready to make the changes, but your spouse or family members can’t quite make the leap. How can you or your loved ones move from indecision, indifference, confusion, or frustration to making a commitment to a healthier lifestyle?

Tip: Rate the importance of the health changes you are considering and work on the most important one.

Behavioral researchers tell us that identifying where you are (or helping your loved ones) in the process of changing your health behaviors is the place to start. Below is a method to sort out your (or their) readiness for a change in behavior affecting health.

Step 1: Rate Your Values

Write down the top three things you value most in life:

1. ___________________________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________________________

Where does good health for you and your family rate on your list of values?

Step 2: Rate How Important It Is for You to Change

Rate how important you feel it is for you and your family to make a health behavior change (0 = low and 10 = high):

____ Eat healthier ____ Eat more vegetables ____ Eat more fruits ____ Drink more water ____ Eat lower-fat foods ____ Exercise more ____ Make time for exercise ____ Lose excess weight ____ Stop smoking ____ Other (write your own desired health behavior changes and rate in the spaces provided):

____ __________ __________ __________

For many people, reasons for making the change may include high blood pressure, diabetes, joint pain, sleep apnea or problems, heart disease, high cholesterol, breathing problems, frustration with appearance, how clothes fit or limited clothing choices, low stamina, and poor self-image.

If you rate yourself or your family’s level of importance low, ask yourself these questions:

• How will my life (or that of my family members) look in the next five years if I continue this way?
• Is it worth continuing down the same path, or is it time to make a change?
• Will I be spending more money on medications, doctor’s bills, or health insurance, or the things I really enjoy?

**Step 3: Rate Your Confidence Level**
Rate your level of confidence to make the health change (0 = low, 10 = high):

____ Eat healthier (fill in how as stated above or with your ideas)

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Exercise more ____
Make time for exercise ____ Lose excess weight ____ Stop smoking ____ Other health behavior change(s) you listed above:

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

**Step 4: Finding a New Direction**
If you rated your confidence low or have had trouble making changes in the past, it's time to look in a new direction. Many people cite lack of time or resources to make a change. Build your confidence by selecting a reputable, research-based program, book, or class. Your health care provider, area hospital, YMCA, and Penn State Extension all can guide you and offer many good resources, times, and places for diet and fitness programs.

**Sources**


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