

Change your mindset to reach New Year's goals

By Callie Miller

Every year millions of people make New Year's resolutions with nutrition goals. Very few see their ambitions through. Most of the time when people don't stick to their goal, the problem is their mindset.

Set yourself up for success in 2024 by focusing on these mindset changes:

Recognize food as fuel

Many people approach nutrition with an "all in, all out" mentality, seeing food as something they need to control or limit. This perspective causes feelings of guilt and shame when one "messes up", reducing self-confidence and ability to achieve the diet goal.

Food is the fuel we need to keep our bodies going. All food is digested and either used as fuel or stored for future use. Rather than focusing on restriction, concentrate on *adding* more quality foods to your diet. Balance is key, if we deprive ourselves of our favorite foods, we begin craving them nonstop and eventually indulge, causing feelings of guilt.

Think about the benefits of adding in more nutrient-rich foods, such as having more energy, better concentration or improved sleep quality. When you see food as something that fuels your body, you create a more positive experience for yourself. You increase your chances of sticking with the goal.

Start small

Many people try fad diets or quick fixes that promise easy results. These approaches are rarely sustainable. It's best to start by making small changes to your diet instead of drastic ones.

Habits form when an action is repeated and results in a positive reward. Think about how you feel when you accomplish a goal. You feel confident and motivated to keep going. On the contrary, if you have a goal that's hard to reach, you may feel like giving up.

Make a list of all the nutrition habits you would like to change. Select the one that's easiest for you to accomplish. Once you accomplish that, you can keep adding in other small, attainable goals from your list.

Learn as you go

Health is not a one-and-done process. It's an ongoing, learning experience. Health changes over time, requiring reflection and changes throughout your life.

With an "all in, all out mentality", it's hard to learn from experiences. Someone with that mindset might feel like a failure if they are struggling to reach their goal. If you flip the mindset into growth, you begin learning and adapting from experiences.

Failure is feedback. Failing is an opportunity to learn and problem solve. For example, let's say you have a goal of eating out less, but keep forgetting your lunch. Instead of viewing yourself as a failure, take a moment to gather information and create a solution to more consistently pack your lunch.

Grow with your health journey instead of viewing it as a pass-fail test.

Changing your mindset about nutrition can be a powerful tool in achieving your New Year's resolution. Think about food as fuel, make small changes and learn from failures. With these easy mindset shifts you can start to make small changes that turn into big accomplishments.

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