

The second stage of diet resolutions

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The small changes you've made have added up to big weight loss results. Now, take a few minutes to write down and review all the positive steps you've made in the past and pick a few new ones to adopt during the

year.

In one column, list all the [healthy habits](#) you've made, like eating more fruit, vegetables and whole grains. In a second column, write down the [unhealthy habits](#) you've given up, like cutting down on saturated fat and sugary treats.

Now add two new items to each list. Maybe it's eating fish twice a week and switching from white to brown rice. Perhaps you're now ready to give up even [diet soda](#) and cut down on [red meat](#).

To reach these new goals, back them up with a specific action plan. The U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases suggests four stages to make goals a reality: contemplation; preparation; action; and maintenance to pledge and keep diet commitments.

For instance, it's not enough to say, "I want to eat more fish." You need to identify how you'll do it—that's what researchers call an if/when approach, such as, "If I want to enjoy a restaurant meal, I'm going to order the salmon."

Planning in advance helps close the gap between just having good intentions and actually following through on the healthy behaviors.

Factors that help you reach goals include memory, attention and self-control. When you're tired or distracted, it's hard to remember all your commitments, so write them down and set reminders to stay on track.

More information: Learn more about the U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases' [four stages of changes plan](#) to turn them into a way of life.

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