

Sustaining a Healthy Change

Effective and lasting weight loss requires building sustainable habits rather than relying on short-term motivation. New Year's resolutions that fail by February isn't going to work.

If someone starts a challenge enthusiastically but loses momentum within a month, it's usually a strategy problem, not a character flaw. Most of us struggle with change, especially when it affects our lifestyle and the things we enjoy.

These actions can help you stay on track.

Make Sure It's Achievable

To make a weight-loss goal achievable, make it SMART. Use the Step Change in [Safety SMART goal planner](#).

- Focus on two or three changes that fit your lifestyle, not ten. The brain handles small shifts better than sweeping reinventions.
- Be specific. Don't set a vague goal like "lose weight" or "get fit". Use the SMART goal planner to say exactly how you'll do it.
- Link changes to why they matter: energy, confidence, longevity, mood, and quality of life.

Anticipate Friction

Most health changes fail because people expect constant motivation. It rises and falls, so you need a back-up plan to stay on track.

Create 'if-then' plans, for example:

- If I'm too tired for a full workout, then I'll do five minutes of movement so I've done something.
- If I forget my healthy lunch, then I'll choose the healthiest option available instead of giving up.
- If life gets busy and I miss a day, then I'll be flexible and make it up. Missing a day is data, not failure – the goal is progress, not perfection.



Prepare for Success

Plan meals, set realistic goals, and shape your environment to make healthy choices easier and stay consistent.

- Create a shopping list: Choose vegetables, fruit, lean protein, and whole grains.
- Plan meals for the week: Decide in advance to avoid unhealthy last-minute choices. Offshore, ask the catering team for the healthy option and stick to it.
- Prepare snacks: Keep healthy options available to make sticking to your plan easier.
- Schedule exercise: Add walks/workouts to your week so they become routine.
- Remove temptation: Put high-calorie foods away, or don't buy them, to reduce overeating.
- Track progress: Use tracking to stay engaged—monitor activity, food, and/or weight. Celebrate streaks (not perfection) and look for patterns.
- Get support: Don't do it alone; others add structure and encouragement. Join a group, share goals with friends, or partner with someone. Support will be available on and offshore.



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Create an Identity Shift

Long-term change sticks when it becomes part of your lifestyle and self-image. An identity shift helps by seeing yourself as someone who lives healthily, making habits more sustainable because they're linked to who you are, not willpower.

Instead of focusing on the number on the scale, set identity goals that matter to you:

- "I am someone who exercises regularly" – move most days of the week.
- "I am someone who chooses healthy foods" – prioritise balanced meals with vegetables, protein, and whole foods.
- "I am someone who plans ahead for my health" – prepare meals, schedule workouts, and commit to routines.
- "I am someone who is active every day" – take the stairs, go for walks, and sit less.
- "I am someone who takes care of my body" – stay hydrated, sleep well, and manage stress.
- "I am someone who makes consistent healthy choices" – focus on long-term habits, not quick fixes.

Together, these shift the focus from "I want to lose weight" to "I'm a healthy person", making behaviour change feel more natural and sustainable over time.

Support with Your Weight Loss Journey

- [Better Health – NHS](#)
- [Weight loss | NHS inform](#)
- [70 healthy recipes for weight loss | Good Food](#)
- [Calorie Tracker & BMR Calculator to Reach Your Goals | MyFitnessPal](#)
- [12 Best Weight Loss Workouts for Beginners: Burn Fat & Get Fit](#)
- Contact your GP, a dietitian, your employer, a personal trainer, or a local weight-management support group

