

Ten tips to maintain change

The best way to have continued success is to have a clear plan of how you will stay on track. Like any successful journey, you will need a map to guide you to where you want to be. Use your experiences on the programme to help you set out your plan for the future.

Step one - SMART goals

Before setting any new goals, it would be a good idea to reflect on those that you've already set and note whether you are still working towards them, or if it's time to revise these and start working towards something new.

Remember to keep your goals SMART.



Step two - visualisation

Visualisation is a technique that is extremely effective for helping you to identify with the changes you have made or are working to maintain.

Take some time each day to visualise what you want to achieve with your goals.

Step three – timing

If you have been visualising the end result of participating in this programme (for example, eating a balanced and nutritious diet or becoming more active), have you also thought about the things you have and still are going to be doing every day to take control of this? It might include daily or weekly targets, such as planning your evening meals for the week or aiming to walk a minimum number of steps each day.

Small changes that are easy to maintain are powerful because they can yield significant results over time.



Step four - positivity

The thoughts that we have guide us in our actions every day and strongly influence how we feel. These thoughts also influence the way in which you approach things, including the types of goals you set. So, it's important to check in with the tone of your thoughts and you can do this by keeping a diary, either on paper or on your phone.



Step five – be realistic

No one is perfect and we will all make the wrong decisions from time to time. However, the way you respond to yourself when you've fallen off track is of key importance.

Responding with compassion takes strength of character and can be tricky for people to do, but it is often the difference between you feeling motivated to continue with your healthy lifestyle and giving in to old habits.

Step six – change

Change things around you to help you, for example, food in your kitchen.

What have you changed about your environment to encourage healthier habits?



Step seven - support

The help of others can be hugely beneficial in helping you achieve your goals.

We hope your friends and family are fully supportive of the changes you have made, but social support doesn't have to stop there. Are there any local groups or organisations that can help you further?

Step eight - reward yourself

The rewards you will get from maintaining your lifestyle changes include improved health and a greater quality of life.

Whilst these things are important for everyone, it's still worth adding in extra rewards along the way to keep you motivated in the short term.

Step nine – reflect

Remember what went well and be proud! Look back at the progress you have made since the beginning of your programme, and remind yourself of all that you have achieved.

Step ten - reflective practice

There will have been highs when things felt really easy and lows where things felt really tough. Taking some time to reflect on the reasons why that happened can be a really useful way for you to identify the best ways you can stay on track and the resources you will find most useful to help with this.

