

Creating Health & Nutrition Fact Sheets

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. Or perhaps you are willing and ready to make the changes, but your spouse or family member can't quite make the leap. How can you or your loved one move from indecision, indifference, confusion, or frustration to making a commitment to a healthier lifestyle?

Behavioral researchers tell us that identifying where you are (or helping your loved one) in the process of changing your health behaviors is the place to

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

Overcoming Obstacles to a Healthy Change

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 below):

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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 my family member's) 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 and more money on medications, doctor's bills, or health insurance, or on the things I really enjoy?

Step 3: Rate your level of confidence

Rate your level of confidence to make the health change (0 = low, 10 = high):

- ___ Eat healthier (fill in how from above or your ideas)
- ___ Exercise more
- ___ Make time for exercise
- ___ Lose excess weight
- ___ Stop smoking
- ___ Other health behavior change you listed above:

Step 4: Finding a new direction

If you rate your confidence low, or you 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. For more information on Penn State Extension programs, check our website at extension.psu.edu or call your county Penn State Extension office.

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Source: Resnicow, K., C. Dilorio, J. E. Soet, D. Ernst, B. Borrelli, and J. Hecht. 2002. Motivational interviewing in health promotion: It sounds like something is changing. *Health Psychology* 21(5), 444-51.

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Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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Produced by Ag Communications and Marketing

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Code UK171 2/14pod