



Practical Resolutions: 5 Facts About Goal Setting

Many people see January as the perfect time to establish goals for the next 12 months. Whether your resolution is to pay off holiday credit card debt, learn a new language, or begin (or re-start) an exercise routine, the following practical tips can help make it easier to set and reach your goals:

- 1. Clear, specific, and measurable goals work best.** Avoid declaring vague resolutions. When it comes to making a change, the people who succeed are those who set clear, numerical goals. "I'm going to recycle all my plastic bottles, soda cans, and magazines for the next 12 months" is more specific than "I'm going to do more for the environment", and putting a time frame on it increases your chances of success. Having a clear plan and a specific deadline makes goals easier to stick with. If your ultimate goal is complex, break it down into several sub-goals that will provide you with frequent feedback to track progress.
- 2. It takes time for a change to become an established habit.** It will probably take a couple of months before any changes — like getting up half an hour early to exercise — become a routine part of your life. That's because your brain needs time to get used to the idea that this new thing you're doing is part of your regular routine.
- 3. Repeating a goal makes it stick.** Say your goal out loud each morning to remind yourself of what you want and what you're working for. (Writing it down works too.) Every time you remind yourself of your goal, you're training your brain to make it happen.
- 4. Pleasing other people doesn't work.** The key to making any change is to finding the desire within yourself — do it because you really want it, not because of family or friends. It is easier to stay motivated if you're doing it for the right reasons.
- 5. Roadblocks don't mean failure.** Slip-ups are a natural part of the learning process as you retrain your brain into a new way of thinking. It may take a few tries to reach a goal, and that's OK! If you slip up now and then, don't beat yourself up over it; simply acknowledge the problem and take action to get yourself back on track.



Lastly, remember plan a reward for yourself for when you succeed!



TAKE THE HIGH ROAD

Although studies show that many angry and aggressive drivers are young men, anyone can drive aggressively when in the wrong mood or when confronted with trying circumstances. Aggressive drivers are unsafe because they take unnecessary chances, cause accidents, and get others injured or killed. Avoid becoming the victim of an aggressive driver by following these suggestions from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety:

- **Don't offend other drivers.** Driving slowly in the left lane, cutting them off, tailgating, or making gestures could be misunderstood or provoke a violent response.
- **Don't engage other drivers.** If you're tempted to become angry, think about the kind of crash angry actions could cause. Give an angry driver plenty of room, avoid eye contact, and get help if you think the other driver is trying to start a fight.
- **Adjust your attitude.** Allowing more time for your trip will help you feel more relaxed behind the wheel. Realize that the reasons for another driver's behavior probably have nothing to do with you.

AVOID REAR-END ACCIDENTS

- Signal your intentions in plenty of time for drivers behind you to react.
- Be alert for anybody following you too closely.
- Leave room in front of you when stopped. Stay far enough back so that you can see the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you touch the street.
- Slow down gradually.



Defensive Driving: Practice Safe Habits

Motor vehicle accidents are the primary cause of accidental deaths in the United States. A person dies in a motor vehicle accident every 12 minutes. Someone is injured in a crash every 10 seconds, and that results in almost 2 million disabling injuries every year.

Avoid becoming a statistic by practicing these defensive driving techniques:

- ⇒ Don't speed.
- ⇒ Follow all traffic rules, signs, and signals.
- ⇒ Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs—or when you're too tired.
- ⇒ Stay at least 2 to 4 seconds behind the car in front—and farther back in bad conditions.
- ⇒ Keep your eyes and attention on the road and other drivers—and keep your hands on the wheel.
- ⇒ Check rear and side view mirrors frequently for traffic approaching from behind.
- ⇒ Adjust your speed and driving to changing weather and traffic conditions.
- ⇒ Expect the unexpected. Watch for sudden movements such as cars pulling out of cross streets or parking places, and watch out for bicycles, pedestrians, or animals darting out in front of you.
- ⇒ Yield to drivers who are determined to get there first.
- ⇒ Wear your seatbelt and make sure everyone in the vehicle is wearing theirs.

