

[LOG IN](#)

Get Emerald Street *delivered free!* **SIGN UP HERE**



Looking for something...?

Search

## THE FIRST STEP IS READING TO THE END OF THIS ARTICLE

January goals: rise early, go to the gym, eat salad, work towards a promotion and only drink white spirits. January reality: sleep in, eat chocolate croissants, drink pinot noir and spend Sundays in pyjamas. We are halfway through the accepted month of self-improvement and, according to a survey by Cancer Research UK, 37% of us will give up on our goals within a fortnight.

“Behaviour change is not easy – we are creatures of habit,” says [author](#) and business adviser [Ros Taylor](#). “We need a purpose and an overwhelming reason that moves us forward.” Rather than focus on the end goal, Taylor recommends you think about the journey to get there. “Let’s say you want to get promoted: you need to work out why you’re not getting promoted and then work towards fixing those things,” she says. “You need someone (for example a friend – colleague) to give you good, honest feedback and then devise a specific, achievable goal.”

[Sherylin Thompson](#), a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, suggests you visualise the benefits of your aspirations. “If you’ve joined a gym, don’t think about the physical act of going to the gym – visualise the positive outcomes such as longer life, more energy, more vitality. Think about the things that will help you achieve the goal – eating healthily, not drinking too much and not smoking,” she says. “Place your goals in the context of your life and what you want to achieve more broadly.”

You’ve devised your goal: now what? “The big challenge is turning it into a habit and making it become part of your everyday repertoire,” says Taylor. “The 21-day rule is true: do something every day for three weeks and you will have got into a habit.” She also suggests you make your resolutions public. “As soon as you tell people, it increases your chance of reaching your goal. You don’t need to be tedious about it – just ask for help and understanding and, if possible, partner with someone who is like-minded.”

Thompson says you should anticipate barriers: “Rather than looking at it in a fatalistic way, identify the things that could get in the way so that when they arrive, you can say, ‘I knew this was going to happen and I will tolerate this discomfort’. You don’t have to maintain enthusiasm for everything you are doing, just keep the behaviour going and visualise the reasons you are doing it.”

If you declared yourself a **dryathlete** and then ended up on the pisco sours last night, don’t worry. “You will slide back but it’s not the slippery slope to disaster,” says Taylor. “Say, ‘It was only once’ and return to your goal tomorrow. The key to success is persistence, repetition and keeping it simple.”

---

Like this... **Like** { 20 } Share this...

### Comments



Add a comment...

Comment using...

Facebook social plugin

---

#### THE EMERALD STREET PROMISE

We only write about things we genuinely like – we can't be bribed. Ads and commercial offers are always clearly marked. And we will NEVER sell your details to any third party, so you won't be bombarded by spam mail.

---

[Contact](#) | [Privacy](#) | [T&Cs](#) | [FAQ](#) | Website by [Clock](#).