

# How to Keep your New Year's Resolutions

Humans have always enjoyed making New Year's resolutions. Historians claim that even the ancient Babylonians made resolutions at the beginning of their calendar year over 4000 years ago!

According to research conducted by comparison website Finder, 72% of Australians — the equivalent to almost 14 million people — set at least one New Year's resolution at the beginning of the year.

Despite its popularity, we're still not very good at keeping our New Year's resolutions. According to multiple studies, approximately 10% of people are successful with the goals they set on January 1st.

So, why is this happening?

## WHY SO MANY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FAIL

Let's take a closer look at that Finder study. From the people they surveyed:

- 30% had goals to improve their fitness
- 28% said they wanted to eat more healthily
- 8% strived for a better work-life balance
- 13% wanted better sleep
- 2% claimed they aimed to quit drinking or gambling

While it's good to have big dreams to strive for, these type of goals are ticking time bombs. Big goals like "I'm going to lose 15 kilograms this year" are great, but without the knowledge of how you're going to get there, you're less likely to achieve the goal.

**A New Year's resolution needs to be:**

1. **achievable,**
2. **relevant and**
3. **time-bound to be a success.**

Other reasons why we don't keep our New Year resolutions include:

### 1) They don't match our values

Some resolutions fail because, deep down, we really don't want to the hard work to get there. We're more likely to want to achieve a task if the action gives us a hit of dopamine (the feel-good hormone). Our brains releases dopamine when we do pleasurable activities like listening to our favourite music, lounging in the sun, or eating our favourite foods.

### 2) You focus on the results and not the process

New Year's resolutions are rarely about the day-today and more about the results. It's easy to get off course without a plan or system in place to build the habits that will get you there.

### 3) False hope

In the motivational wave of the New Year, it's easy to get caught up in what you could do. But overconfidence with what you can achieve often means you'll give up when you don't see results fast enough.

### 4) Trying to do multiple things at once

You need to be realistic about what can actually happen. Taking on too much at once usually means everything will eventually fail.

### 5) Not having a clear plan in place

Not having a clear and measurable plan of how you're achieving your goal will make it harder to achieve. Not only that, but it's likely you don't have a plan if something goes wrong!

### 6) No clear reward

To work, a resolution needs to become a habit and new habits



Get instant support when you need it.  
Scan the QR code to book an appointment  
with a **Converge** expert today!



Download our App to access wellbeing  
support 24/7. Your organisation code:

**Converge**  
Care Anytime Anywhere

# How to Keep your New Year's Resolutions

require a reward to make them stick. That's why some people only listen to their favourite podcast when they run or eat a piece of chocolate after finishing a chapter of a book. The reward makes the habit stick.

So many New Year's resolutions are goals that we know can improve our lives and how we feel in the long run, but require some level of sacrifice or, simply put, are not fun to do. It's no wonder we don't end up keeping our pledges!

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

So, how can we buck the trend this year? Here's some practical advice that can help you achieve your New Year goals:

### 1) Be realistic

A big sweeping pledge like "I'm going to run 10 miles every weekend" when you don't like running is unlikely to come to fruition. Instead, pick an activity you do enjoy, like taking long walks while listening to music, and shape your goal around this.

### 2) Be specific

Using the walking analogy, simply aiming to "walk more" or "walk further" means there's no tangible goal for you to reach. According to the book 'Atomic Habits' by James Clear, a simple way to apply a winning strategy to your habits is to fill out this sentence: I will [BEHAVIOUR] at [TIME] in [LOCATION].

### 3) Link your resolution to a habit you already have

For example, note that the previous example was walking while listening to music. By mixing music listening (something you're likely to get a dopamine burst from) with walking (something you're less likely to do on a regular basis) you're more likely to achieve your goal.

### 4) Establish a level of accountability

When we complete a task we don't enjoy, it's usually done because there's a consequence if we don't do it. So, if your goal is to stop procrastinating at work, ask your co-worker to give you a friendly nudge when you start staring at your phone mid-morning. It's also important to give yourself a reward if you are achieving your goals.

### 5) Share the goal

One of the best ways to keep a New Year's resolution is to share it with someone else or a group of people. For example, if you want to train for a marathon, you're more likely to go out for a run on a rainy day if you've got a partner who is dragging you out the door.

### 6) Small steps are often the best

If you have an overall goal, it's okay to take smaller steps initially to achieve it. Like in our running scenario, very few people can go out and run a marathon — it takes training that initially begins with smaller runs.

### 7) Allow yourself to fail

A habit is hard to form and, on some days, you're not going to achieve the task you've set yourself. It's important in these moments to know that it's okay to fail. Don't let the occasional missed exercise class or Friday doughnut throw you off course. Most people slip up in the first month, but it's those who continue to persist with their goal that are the most successful.

### 8) Make it easier on yourself

Don't set yourself up to fail. If your resolution is to spend less time on your phone before bed, don't bring it into bed with you. Set your alarm and put it out of reach.

### 9) Don't be afraid to change it up

Doing something for 365 days is tough, so why not try micro-resolutions this year? Separate the year into segments, whether that's monthly or quarterly, and pick a series of different goals that can fill these new timescales.

**So, whether you want to be a healthier person or achieve a better work-life balance, ensure you have set small, measurable, goals to achieve your resolution. Always keep in mind why you want to achieve your goals and, if you do fail, don't let this define you. Failure is a chance to evaluate what worked and what didn't.**



Get instant support when you need it.  
Scan the QR code to book an appointment  
with a **Converge** expert today!



Download our App to access wellbeing  
support 24/7. Your organisation code:

**Converge**  
Care Anytime Anywhere