

Thinking about changing

Do you want to lose weight, quit smoking, eat healthier, get fit, manage stress, drink less alcohol? First, ask yourself: Are you ready to change?

Meg Baker, director of Employee Wellness at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, says while the focus on self-improvement is good, you must be ready to make a change in order to actually do so. To help prepare for any lifestyle change, Baker offers some tips:

- Develop small, short-term goals that will fit into your schedule. Make them realistic.
- Consider the benefits and reasons for the change.
- Talk to a family member, friend, or coworker about goals. Sharing your goals with others will increase the likelihood of your staying committed to a new gym regimen or stop smoking plan, and they may want to join you.

“If the new behavior has lost its luster, switch things up,” Baker said. “Variety is the key to life and can keep you from getting burned out. Spice things up by changing your normal exercise routine, finding new healthy recipes online, or joining a new exercise class.”

