University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

AUGUST 2017

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

CREATE AND KEEP A NEW HEALTHY HABIT

Habits can be good or they can be not-so-good. Have you ever tried to change one of your not-so-good habits, only to go back to your usual routine? It is hard to keep up the motivation for a change in behavior.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when you are trying to create and keep a new, healthy habit.

- **It does not have to be "all-or-nothing".** Many times when we start to change a behavior, we tend to think that we need to be perfect 100 percent, with no slip-ups. Staying motivated at that pace is hard, especially if you are trying to change too many things at once. Instead, start small. If you want to start walking, find a time for just 10 minutes and build up to 30 minutes. If you want

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to start eating healthier, choose one meal a day to start. Pack a healthy lunch from home instead of getting lunch from a fast food place. Just remember that you do not have to do everything all at once.

- **Be creative.** It can be hard to find the time to make healthy habits. If you are creative, you may be able to get a little "extra" accomplished. Instead of looking for the best parking spot, park in the back of the lot and walk, or take the stairs instead of the elevator. If you are making healthy food choices, pack your favorite fruit as a treat for that midday slump or add green vegetables to a smoothie. These little boosts will help you reach your goal.

> *Pack a healthy lunch from home instead of getting lunch from a fast food place.*

- **Be patient with yourself.** Creating and sticking with a new health habit is hard. And remember that it can take time to see results when making a change. You could write down your actions and keep track of successes and areas for improvement. Don't forget to celebrate the successes that you have. Small successes can add up to big changes!

Changing habits is very difficult. When trying to create and keep a new health habit, think of starting small to achieve your goals, be creative and be patient with yourself.

SOURCE:
http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/make-healthy-habits-stick

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