



Sticking to New Year's Resolutions

Individuals Newsletter February 2024

It's that time of year again. The Christmas tree has been taken down, all the wine has dried up, and the decorations are shoved in an old box ready to collect dust for another year.

According to Forbes Advisor, 1 in 5 British people feel under pressure to set New Year's resolutions and far fewer people complete them.

Regardless of your resolution, it is always essential to prioritise your mental health. If you feel as though you are creating unhealthy habits, Health Assured would suggest speaking to a professional counsellor.

It's crucial to set realistic goals, not put too much pressure on yourself, and to plan. But these aren't the only things you can do to stick to your New Year's goals.



5 ways to stick to New Year's Resolutions

01 - Why your goals are important

Clarifying the reasons and importance of the resolution will ignite drive and determination.

Having a clear understanding of what you want to achieve and why it's important, encourages longevity

sticking to the resolution.

Write down the resolution and why it's important to achieve it. Is it because you want to be healthier? Lose weight? Have better mental health?

The more you understand why you are making the change, the easier it will be to adhere to the resolution.

02 - Plan ahead

Planning is essential when sticking to and achieving resolutions. After all, it was Benjamin Franklin who stated, 'By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.'

Planning gives you a sense of direction and what to expect from your journey. It gives a better understanding of the journey and the potential barriers.

Try applying SMART: (Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound)

1. Is it specific?
2. Can you measure the goal?
3. Is it achievable?
4. How relevant is it?
5. How long will it take for you to complete the resolution?

A great way of answering some of these questions is to research how long the average person takes to achieve your specific resolution.

Research the possible barriers others have experienced and figure out how to overcome these setbacks, this will prepare you for any that you may face on your resolution journey.

03 - Stack Goals

Habits become second nature after a while.

Compounding your everyday habits with your resolution could improve your ability to stick to them. The idea is to add an already-existing habit, like having a shower, and add your new resolution to the sequence of this habit.

For example, if your resolution is to meditate for better peace of mind, plan your meditation time straight after brushing your teeth in the morning. This creates a routine that your brain will associate meditation after brushing your teeth. After a few times, it will become second nature and you will find it easier to stick to your resolution.

04 - Be realistic

Too often people will step into the new year with a mountain of changes and resolutions in mind. They endeavour to complete too many new goals at once and end up ditching them.

Focus on no more than three goals, ideally, the focus should be on one to two goals at a time, especially if they are large resolutions like quitting smoking or losing weight. Overloading too many resolutions will encourage burnout and prevent motivation and focus. This is a big reason why a lot of people end up dropping their resolutions.

05 - Support

Getting support from a friend or family is a great way to stay accountable and motivated. Let them know what you are doing and how long it should take to finish. You could ask them to set up regular check-ins to keep you determined and inspired.

If you feel as though you are developing unhealthy habits from your resolution, seek advice and support from a professional counsellor. For example, if you feel as though you are restricting your food intake to unhealthy levels because you want to lose weight, speak to a counsellor. A counsellor will introduce new perspectives and ideas that may help you reach your resolution goals with healthier techniques and behaviours.





Dry January: The benefits of a month without alcohol

Individuals Newsletter February 2024

As the new year begins, it's a great opportunity to reflect on your drinking habits. Perhaps the holiday celebrations led to overindulgence, a string of hangovers, and an unexpected gasp at the bank balance.

Taking a month off from drinking could help you step back and examine your relationship with alcohol and consider the implications on your mental health. Undoubtedly, this task will prove to be easier for some than others. You might learn you depend on it to manage stress or feel comfortable in social situations. Or you might discover you feel better and think more clearly when not drinking.

The challenge of socialising and avoiding alcohol

Many people will find it hard to socialise without being tempted to have a drink. We live in a society where alcohol is omnipresent and often goes hand in glove with many social activities – going to the pub, out for a meal, watching live sports, attending weddings, festivals, local Christmas markets, and even airports are brimmed with bars.

In an illuminating podcast, the British actor Tom Holland, best known for playing Spider-Man, opens up about his mental battles with sobriety.

After a “very, very boozy” Christmas period, Holland found that having resolved to complete a dry January, “all I could think about was having a drink... it really scared me”.

5 Benefits of Dry January

According to medical experts, abstaining from alcohol for one month may result in several physical and mental health benefits.

01 - Better sleep

The most immediate benefit of Dry January you will notice is improved sleep within a week. Alcohol is a sleep disruptor and studies have shown that it inhibits REM sleep. Reducing alcohol intake leads to better rest, further improving energy levels, focus, and productivity.

You can read more about the benefits of getting a good night's rest in our article [here](#).

02 - Clearer skin

Many people notice their skin looks and feels better when they stop drinking. Without alcohol's diuretic effects, the body and skin are naturally more hydrated – even after a few days.

03 - Weight loss

Alcohol can lead to weight gain by preventing the body from burning fat, contributing to sugar and starch intake, and causing cravings for foods high in fat. Cutting out alcohol even for a month can help you avoid those negative effects and the calories associated with alcohol, particularly beer and wine.

04 - Balanced mood

While it feels like alcohol lifts your spirits, it is actually a mood-depressant. People who drink heavily often experience bouts of depression and anxiety—even if they don't have a history of these mental health conditions. Cutting back can help you avoid the emotional slump that comes after a night out and may increase feelings of well-being.

05 - Healthier relationship with alcohol

It's a good idea to occasionally re-evaluate your relationship with alcohol. If you feel better when you're not drinking, then your body is telling you something.

Developing a healthy relationship with alcohol will improve your overall wellbeing and mental health and have a positive impact on other areas of your life. You may find you are sleeping better, having fewer negative interactions with loved ones or work colleagues, and feeling more in control of your life decisions.

Supporting your employees with alcohol addiction and mental health challenges

With a Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), we can offer you practical advice and support when it comes to dealing with alcohol addiction, depression, and how to improve your work-life balance.

Our EAP provides guidance and supports your employees with their mental health in the workplace and at home. We can help you create a safe, productive workspace that supports all.

We support your employee's mental wellbeing with any problems they might be facing in their professional or personal lives with our 24-hour counselling helpline.





Cervical Cancer Prevention Week 2024

Individuals Newsletter February 2024

At Health Assured, we're proud to be supporting Cervical Cancer Prevention Week. The campaign aims to bring attention to those whose lives have been impacted by cervical cancer, to find solutions, and to remember those we have lost.

In the UK, around 3,200 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year, with over 800 losing their lives.

Cervical cancer and mental health

Being diagnosed with cervical cancer can have significant physical, emotional, and financial impacts which can last far beyond diagnosis and treatment. It is normal to experience a range of difficult thoughts and feelings that may change, go away, and come back over time.

Some people have lots of emotions while others may feel numb or as if this were happening to someone else. There is no right or wrong way to think and feel, but it is important to recognise what you are going through to seek help if you feel you need it.

A cervical cancer diagnosis and treatment can trigger many different feelings, including:

- Fear and anxiety
- Worry
- Isolation or loneliness
- Sadness or depression
- Anger or irritability
- Guilt
- Embarrassment or self-consciousness
- Grief or loss

What you can do if you are worried about cervical cancer?

01 - Share your feelings

It can be helpful to share any worries you have with people you know. You could talk to a friend or family member you trust. Chances are, they have experienced similar feelings.

Ask your GP or practice nurse any questions you have and let them know if you have any concerns about the appointment. They will be able to reassure you and sometimes, it can help to talk to someone you don't know.

02 - Get support

If you recognise some of the above feelings and experiences, seek support. Support is available, but we know that it is not easy for everyone with a mental health problem to get the treatment and help they need.

If you have been struggling with your mental health, let your cancer team know if your cancer treatment is affecting your mental health. You may be able to get mental health support through cancer services.

Some cancer hospitals are linked with Macmillan Information Services or Maggie's Centres. They are available throughout the UK. These services can be a place to start when seeking mental health support when you have cancer. You can contact them by phone or email or visit in person.

You can also speak to others in the cancer community by using Cancer Chat, Cancer Research UK's online forum for people affected by cancer. You can learn from them how they managed to find support.

03 - Counselling and therapy

Counselling offers a safe space to explore how you feel with a non-judgemental professional. What you're going through is very difficult

and many people find that this brings up emotions and life changes.

Bottling these feelings up inside can become overwhelming. Over time these feelings build up and make things extremely difficult. A counsellor can help you find ways to cope and manage the emotions you're facing.

Supporting your organisation with physical, emotional, and mental health challenges

With a Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), we can offer you practical advice and support when it comes to your physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

Our EAP provides guidance and supports your employees with their mental health in the workplace and at home. We can help you create a safe, productive workspace that supports all.

We support your employee's mental wellbeing with any problems they might be facing in their professional or personal lives with our 24-hour counselling helpline.

[Find out more about EAPs](#)





Private Renting: Eviction in England

Individuals Newsletter February 2024

Private rental eviction in England will depend on what type of tenancy is in place and the exact terms of the contractual agreement. Landlords must follow the correct legal procedure when evicting tenants to ensure they do not face legal action. Therefore, it is essential that tenants also understand their rights and obligations under English Law.

Assured and regulated tenancies

Firstly, it is necessary to determine the start date of the tenancy. Those which started before 27th February 1997 may require for the landlord to follow a different process for eviction to what the law currently sets out. The below links explain what assured and regulated tenancies look like and the process required. However, there are very few of these that remain today:

[Assured Tenancies](#)

[Regulated Tenancies](#)

Excluded tenancies and licences

Where an individual does not have access to any part of the property, the agreement with the landlord is likely to be an excluded licence. But if the individual has exclusive access to their room, this will be an excluded tenancy.

These individuals can be evicted with written or verbal 'reasonable notice'. Reasonable in this context will be the period of rental payment, meaning if rent is payable monthly, the landlord would be required to serve a one-month

notice. However, this is not a hard and fast rule, the landlord can choose to give the individual more than 'reasonable notice' but cannot give less than this.

Assured shorthold tenancies (AST's) – two types:

- Fixed-Term Tenancies – these are tenancies which run for a fixed period (e.g., 1 year) and have an end date agreed.
- Periodic Tenancies – these are tenancies which do not have a definite end date and run on either a weekly or monthly basis.

The link below explains in greater detail the different features of an AST. These evictions can be served using either s21 notices, s8 notices or both:

[Read more](#)

Section 21 notices

This is the most common way of ending fixed-term or period tenancies. The landlord must provide their tenant with a 2-month notice served on either a Form 6A or a document drafted by the landlord which includes the same information.

A landlord does not need to provide a reason for eviction, however, there are certain situations in which a s21 cannot be served. The link below discusses these reasons.

[Read more](#)

Section 8 notices

S8 notices are used when a tenant has breached the terms of the tenancy agreement, and the landlord would like to seek possession of the property.

The landlord must serve and explain to

the tenant on Form 3, the exact breach of tenancy terms. Notice can vary between two weeks to two months depending on the nature of the breach.

Landlords are advised to keep proof of s21 and s8 notice via an N215 Form or including the name of the landlord and the date the notice was served on the written notice.

Possession orders

Landlords will be required to use a standard possession order where tenants owe rent and an accelerated possession order where there are no rent arrears.

If tenants are still at the property past this notice period, landlords can use this evidence to apply for a standard possession order or an accelerated possession order. Once the application is made, the judge may automatically grant the order or decide to set a hearing.

Illegal eviction

If a landlord does not follow the correct legal procedure, they could be committing the criminal offence of illegal eviction.

[Read more](#)

Reform on notices

It is useful to bear in mind that the law is estimated to change in October of 2024, which will introduce more comprehensive possession grounds and require landlords to provide a valid reason when ending a tenancy, ultimately ending this concept of 'no-fault evictions.'

[Read more](#)

