

Ten Mistakes People Make When Implementing New Wellness Habits

by Chris Vasiliadis

Frequently, we can self-sabotage our efforts to get and stay well. See if you can identify yourself in any of the following common hurdles.

1. Approach it from an all or nothing perspective. Whoops -- just had a Hershey's Kiss -- may as well eat half the bag and stay off the wagon the rest of the day! If I can't get in my standard hour of exercise, why bother? Remember that you can start over in any moment (don't wait until the next day). Exercise (e.g., walk) in 10 minute chunks if this is the only way you achieve your desired time on a given day. Even 10 minutes of movement is better than 10 minutes on the sofa.

2. For those who are spiritual by nature, not leveraging that Source in attaining their wellness goals. Relying on and regularly connecting with this Source is a powerful ally. For those who believe in such a Source, it's a reassurance and strength that you don't have to go it alone.

3. Not having a partnership with their physician. Clue in your physician with the changes you want to make and why. They may have additional suggestions, resources and testing to recommend that support your goals. If you're at risk for any form of exercise, find out what you can safely do and not do. Finally, if you don't have a good working relationship with your physician, fix the relationship or shop around for a new one.

4. Taking on all aspects of wellness at once: eating, exercise, mind/body work, stress management. Instead, set yourself up for success. Choose 1 or 2 priority areas for improvement and focus there first. Master those areas and then tackle the next.

5. Not having a support system in place. Have at least one person in your corner to support and assist you with implementing your changes. Possibilities include a Wellness Coach, a best friend, a spouse, a workout buddy, your family or roommate.

6. Trying to improve weaknesses instead of building upon strengths. You'll move further faster (and feel better quicker) when you first apply your past successes and strengths toward achieving your new goals. Spend a bit of time in the past (not excessively, as stated in point 7), to consider the strengths you used to achieve your past success. How can you apply those strengths today?

7. Dwell on the past instead of focus on the present opportunity. What's past is past. The body or energy level you had then, what you did and didn't do. While your past brought you to today, it has zero influence on the actions you take now, in this moment, to create your future. Choose the future you want and inject a new bright energy to make it happen.

8. Neglect to celebrate milestones in healthy ways. Did you write in your food/exercise journal every day this week -- great! Treat yourself to *People* magazine or other small trinket that brings you a few moments of happiness (vs. eating a candy bar). Call a friend you haven't spoken to in a while. Establish bigger rewards for when you hit the bigger goals.

9. Have an outlook that this will be hard.

Bringing negative judgment to something you haven't even started is like applying the brake when you're trying to accelerate. It delays forward movement (and makes you crabby in the process). As Nike says, just do it! Remember all the positive reasons why you want your

wellness, and find ways to inject fun in the process. Choose fun forms of exercise, try new interesting recipes, host a healthy tasty pot-luck, pick fun rewards.

10. Managing their time instead of managing their energy.

When you're managing your energy, it's like time magically expands. You become more efficient, get more done and feel better in the process.

If you saw yourself in one or more of these examples, I encourage you to take the action step of turning it around. I'm a big believer in using mistakes for awareness, learning and growth. How can you grow toward your goals? How can you treat yourself like your own best friend in the process?

Chris Vasiliadis had a wake-up-call to her wellness in late 2005, when she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis: a chronic disease of the central nervous system. That event initiated many lifestyle changes for Chris, ultimately leading to her improved health and new career as a Certified Wellness Coach. Through her business, Priority Wellness, she helps people regroup, recharge and take control of their wellness. With a special interest in helping sole proprietors and small business owners, clients come to Chris when they're tired, or tired of being tired. They know they're not eating right, exercising enough or consistently, and/or not managing stress well, and they've had enough of living that way. Working over the phone with Chris, they make their wellness a priority and create new habits to master their well-being. Chris can be contacted at 781-791-7642 or chris@prioritywellness.com.