

The 'How To' Of New Year Resolutions

We make resolutions in the hope that our next year will be better than our last year. And ultimately, that's so we can be happier next year. We all know happiness is vital to our well being. Yet, with our busy lives, happiness is usually the last thing on which we focus. The new year is a great opportunity to prioritise happiness so that in 12 months time, you can reflect on your fantastic year! Here are five easy tips for improving happiness in the coming year and beyond.

1. Do something you enjoy every day

Life is short. But we don't always remember that on a daily basis. We get caught up in what we need to do, leaving 'me time' as a distant memory. 'Me time' is necessary to your happiness and well being, and you should schedule it every day. Without consciously thinking about it, it won't happen. It might be enjoying a great cup of coffee, listening to your favourite playlist in the car, or reading your book in peace for 20 minutes. Whatever it is, it's up to you to make sure it happens, and that you appreciate it when it does.

2. Dish out happiness

One of the greatest ways to feel happier is to give. And we're not necessarily talking about things of monetary value. Some may call this kind of giving 'paying it forward'. One easy way is to look for the opportunities to do something pleasant for someone unexpectedly. It may be making a colleague a cup of coffee when you're making yours, or giving some positive feedback to someone who wasn't expecting it. Choose a day every week that is your 'pay it forward' day, and look for the opportunities to make someone in the world a bit happier. Over time you'll find that it's your happiest day of the week.

3. Keep in touch

Each year goes by quicker than the last. A new year is a great opportunity to make contact with those close to you, whom you have missed. Grab your

diary now, before it fills up entirely and schedule those phone calls or catch ups so they are there ahead of time. That way, it makes catching up with those who matter to you seamless, rather than something you look back and wish you had done.

4. Make at least two good health choices a day

Some of us enjoy keeping fit and healthy, and for others it's more of a challenge. Whichever camp you fit into, good health is not an all or nothing pursuit. Everything you do to improve your health is worthwhile. Start every day by choosing two health related activities for that day. It's a great way to improve your overall health and happiness, without feeling overwhelmed. You may choose to park further from work and walk or to take a new exercise class with some friends. You'll feel better for it.

5. Apply Pareto's principle

We've all heard of the 80/20 rule, and it seems to apply to almost everything. It's been said that 80% of your happiness will come from 20% of your activities. Plan ahead this year to make sure that you spend at least 20% of your time and energy in the activities that make you happy. Create a top five list: what are the top five things that make you happy? It could be spending time with friends or learning something new. The key is to first identify them and then plan your time to make sure they happen, at least 20% of the time.

It's often the simple things that make us happy. If you focus on these five options, it is likely that you'll be investing no more than an hour a day in your happiness. It's not a huge ask, but it will make a huge difference. Happy New Year! 💡

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