

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

POSITIVE TIPS for the NEW YEAR

The New Year can be a time of positive change. The tips below are a great place to start on your journey to a happy, healthy and productive year!

SET SMART GOALS AND PLAN TO SUCCEED.

New Year's Resolutions are great to help you kick start your goals, but many people get discouraged after a few weeks. Research shows that to achieve success throughout the year follow this acronym and make your goals SMART:

- **Specific:** Call mom once a week vs. Improve relationship with mom.
- **Measurable:** Walk three times per week vs. Get more Exercise
- **Attainable:** Lose 1/2 lb per week vs. Lose 10 lbs by this weekend
- **Relevant:** Save 5 percent each paycheck vs. Be a millionaire next year
- **Time Specific:** Stop drinking sodas by March 1 vs. Cut down on sugar



GUARD YOUR MENTAL HEALTH LIKE A WATCHDOG.

Your mental health is important, right? So be cautious about acting or thinking in ways that limit your potential. Negative self-talk when things go awry puts you at risk for undermining other goals for yourself. Defeat destructive thought patterns by banishing them as they

arise. Use a mental keyword such as “enough!” and refocus into positive territory.



EXERCISE. Regular exercise helps you feel better physically and emotionally. It's a great way to manage stress. If you have trouble sticking to an exercise pattern, set small goals and start incorporating more movement into your life every day. Take the stairs, walk around the block, stretch during TV commercials, dance with the kids to music on the radio. Finding an accountability buddy is also a great way to stay motivated.



TACKLE PROCRASTINATION.

It's amazing how much you can accomplish if you just keep after it. Organize and prioritize by making a list of what you need to accomplish this week and month. Break down your workload into daily bite-size

chunks. Make copies and post them in areas where you're most likely to see them. Give yourself permission to play once your tasks are done.

INVESTIGATE THAT NAGGING “BLAH” FEELING.

Depression is not “in your head.” It's in your whole body. And it's a real, treatable disease — but only if you know you have it. Depression may be the result of genetics, environment, lifestyle or a combination of factors. If you are feeling blah or having trouble shaking the blues, schedule an appointment with the UAB EACC or talk to your physician.



GET PERSPECTIVE. Make every day meaningful. It's easy to get lost in projects or problems and lose sight of our goals. With busyness and stress comes a natural loss of perspective. Planned and purposeful activities that change your focus and create temporary healthy detachments can help you avoid getting lost in never ending “to do” lists.

HAVE FUN! Last but not least, don't forget to make time to do the things you enjoy and find something to smile about every day.