



## HEALTH TIPS

Spicy foods like chillies and garlic increase your fat burning metabolism



Strawberries prevents stomach problems caused by long-term drinking or excessive use of anti-inflammatory drugs

# Overhaul your life in 30 days

In the first article of a three-part series to get your life back on track, a panel of experts lays out a master plan to help you kick those bad habits



**A** habit is formed bit by bit. A bad habit can be undone in the same way - step by baby step. So if you're overdoing things - food, work, porn, smoking and alcohol - we have a plan for you. Instead of being overwhelmed by the enormity of getting rid of your vices and overhauling your life, break the process down into minor changes you can make over the next one month.

It is estimated that out of every 11,000 signals our brain receives, it consciously processes only about 40. So when we unwittingly indulge temptations, over time they turn into bad habits and we become slaves to them in the long run. Use the same process to break old ways and form new, more positive ones. Remember, only the first few weeks are the hardest. Our panel of experts lays out the steps for you.

## SMOKING

**1 Stop making excuses:** Most smokers have rationalisations for continuing smoking. 'Today is a bad day, I will quit tomorrow', 'I will smoke only one cigarette to get over work stress' or 'One has to die of something, why not smoke?'. Identify these beliefs and write them down in a diary. You will realise you are mistaken about these thoughts and they are actually just excuses. Against your note, make another elaborating the reason why you ought to quit. It will help you be decisive and stay determined.

**2 Manage the withdrawal:** Soon after you quit smoking, the lack of nicotine affects your brain and withdrawal symptoms kick in within two days. You will feel irritable and unable to concentrate. You will suffer from coughs, headaches and constipation. Instead of returning to the cancer stick, focus on overcoming these symptoms.

Whenever you feel edgy, drink water or fruit juice and relax. Avoid stressful work for that moment. If it doesn't help, take a five-minute walk. Try cough drops and over the counter pain relievers for cough, headache and constipation.

Start exercising in the morning. To concentrate better, deep breathe and remind yourself that you are inhaling fresh air in your lungs instead of cigarette smoke. In a week, these symptoms will abate and you will feel proud of yourself.

**3 Feed the desire:** If smoking has been part of your every activity - early morning in the toilet, while commuting to office, during breaks, lunch and dinner and before sleep, you are likely to crave for it at these times. You need to be prepared to divert your attention to something else so you don't lapse in that critical

moment. Keep mouth fresheners such as sauf, chewing gum and candy handy. They will trick your brain and keep you from smoking.

**4 Keep your mind busy:** For the times when you are by yourself - while commuting for instance - pick up a hobby to keep yourself busy. Read a book, carry a camera or install a fun game on your cellphone.

**5 Avoid other smokers:** It's hard to resist when your friends are lighting up. For some time, avoid those you smoke with - in office or hangouts. Hang out with non-smokers.



## GLUTTONY

**1 Keep food out of sight:** You are most likely to give in when a temptation is within your reach. The farther the food is from your reach, the less likely you are to have it. Tell your colleagues to help by not offering goodies to you. At home, keep food items such as biscuits, chips and sweets in steel or non-see through containers.

**2 Small helpings:** You are likely to hog if food is served in a large dish. If you buy a small pack of chips, you will eat only that much. But if you buy a large one, you won't stop until it's finished. When shopping, go for multi-packs such as ice-creams rather than family packs. Also, do not put the serving bowl on the dining table. Take food on your plate to the table. Put your fork

down between meals. This will allow you to chew food properly and take longer over it. This will help you feel full earlier.

**3 Plan:** Set a fixed time for your meals. In case you have to attend a late dinner party, you are less likely to indulge in overeating if you have already eaten your dinner.

**4 No TV:** Do not watch television while eating. If you're engrossed in that soap opera, you will miss the feeling-full signal sent by the stomach to the brain and eat way more than required.

**5 No chewing gum:** Popping a chewing gum initiates the release of gastric juices in the stomach which give you a false feeling of hunger.