- Habit

Is being healthy difficult for you?

Practical tips to successfully transition into sustainable, healthy habits

Manila Bulletin · 8 Apr 2026 · HEALTHY EVER AFTER CHESHIRE QUE, RND, RN, RD

We all know we need to consume fruits and vegetables every single day, get eight hours of sleep a night, drink at least eight glasses of water, eat breakfast, and exercise. Many, however, struggle even with just drinking enough water in a day.



While the importance of nutrition and physical activity to one's overall health is widely known and recommended by experts, it is also common knowledge that there are barriers that affect adherence to healthy habits.

In my over two decades of private practice as a registered nutritionist-dietitian, I have encountered the following barriers to adopting healthy habits:

1. Lack of time – People don't have time to exercise, prepare home-cooked meals, eat breakfast, drink water, or sleep due to never-ending deadlines and so on. But is time really the issue, or does it have something to do with setting priorities?

2 Lack of motivation – A person either just doesn't know the purpose of living a healthy lifestyle or simply lacks the energy to do something about it. Motivation is a mindset. While support is very helpful, motivation must come from within. Oftentimes, an individual may not feel self-confident in becoming healthier.

3. Procrastination – Adapting healthy habits may be overwhelming. A person who hasn't had any experience

Tell yourself that you don't need to aim for perfection. All you need is a little progress one day at a time.

in cooking may get intimidated by following a recipe and just resort to ordering take-out. A person who hasn't stepped into the gym all their life may just be too overwhelmed to even go for a free trial. If a task seems too much, the temptation to put it off for tomorrow is so great that it's easier to succumb. Waiting for the time when it will feel right for you may never come.

4. Lack of resources – Healthy food is more expensive. This is true especially when you dine out. A bowl of salad costs double or triple the amount of a fried chicken and rice meal that also comes with a drink. Paying for annual gym memberships can possibly be tantamount to paying for a school tuition fee. Buying exercise equipment or ordering from diet delivery services can be costly. The list goes on. These are undeniable facts, but they should not be a deterrent to living a healthier lifestyle because there are other options.
– We grew up with habits that have already been ingrained in our system. It's difficult to let go of these habits. Like adding sugar to coffee, drinking milk, using oil in almost all dishes that we cook, and more. When we think of the word healthy, we instinctively think that it's boring, unappetizing, and too much work. Healthy food is deemed not delicious. Exercising is perceived as exhausting. Furthermore, we may
* make attempts to eat healthy, but we go about it the wrong way and choose the wrong stuff because we lack proper knowledge. Not everything that you search online is science-based. For instance, you drink fruit juice and think that it is healthy since it has fruit on the label. Unfortunately, if that fruit juice is not 100 percent fruit juice but has added sugar and other chemicals, then you are just drinking refined sugar. Have you ever thought that cereal and milk are healthy breakfast options? They are not.
If you wish to become healthier, even if deep inside you feel hopeless, why don't you give these practical tips a chance? Tell yourself that you don't need to aim for