

Go to Health Contract Instructions

1. First and foremost, do not attempt to set a pledge for A through E at one time if you are at the beginning of your journey to Go to Health. Also, don't feel that you are at the "beginning" of your journey only if you just began. You are at the "beginning" of your journey if you have not been practicing the healthy habits that will help you achieve your health and wellness goals.

2. Prior to preparing the contract, do a serious evaluation of where you are in your journey. Here are some general things to consider:

A. Make small changes. If you don't drink any water, don't write down what you eat and don't exercise then don't expect yourself to drink 64 ounces of water tomorrow, write down everything that you eat this week and walk four miles a day. You MUST start from where you are RIGHT NOW. A person that decides to run a marathon doesn't wake up one morning and go sign up for one that day. They train for it, possibly run some smaller races and prepare for the marathon. Make small changes and build on those until you are eventually living a healthier lifestyle.

B. For the number of days in the pledges, again consider what you are doing now. Don't start with seven days if you aren't doing any days now. I would say to start with one more day than you are doing now. If you aren't doing any days, then start with three. But again, you need to look within yourself to see what would be challenging as well as achievable. Don't make it too easy or you won't feel as if you've accomplished anything. Nor do you want to make it so unattainable that you won't even begin.

C. For Pledge A:

i. How much can you sensibly and safely lose in a week? This shouldn't be more than 1% of your weight or a maximum of 2 pounds.

ii. How much time are you willing to devote to preparing meals, recording your food intake and exercising. All can (and probably will) affect your weight loss.

D. For Pledge B:

i. How much water do you drink right now?

ii. How much more can you drink than you already do?

iii. What beverages are you drinking instead of water?

iv. What substitutions can you make with those beverages so you're drinking more water?

E. For Pledge C:

i. What exercise do you do right now?

ii. How much time are you willing to devote to exercise? Notice I didn't say "how much time do you have" to exercise!?! We all have 24 hours in the day. It's a matter of how you choose to spend them. For help in finding more time in your day, please see time saving tips that just might help.

iii. How physically fit are you? If you never exercise, haven't had a physical lately and are over 40 years of age, you should probably get with your doctor before exercising. But don't feel that means that you cannot do anything right now. There are several simple exercises that can be done without too much exertion. Just moving instead of sitting is exercise! Like a friend once shared with me: Don't

lie when you can sit. Don't sit when you can stand. Don't stand when you can walk. Don't walk when you can run. DO SOMETHING!

F. For Pledge D:

- i. What's worked for you in the past?
- ii. What hasn't worked for you in the past?
- iii. What are you willing to do now?

G. For Pledge E:

- i. Same questions as above What's worked for you in the past?
- ii. What hasn't worked for you in the past?
- iii. What are you willing to do now?

H. For Pledge F:

i. This is probably the most important pledge of all of them. It is vitally important to focus on the positive. That is why Pledge F states to end each day with a positive affirmation. Sometimes that positive affirmation may be nothing more than vowing to try again tomorrow with the hope of better results. If you get off course on your journey to health today but vow to try again tomorrow, you are one step ahead of the person that does great today but gives up tomorrow.

ii. Part of Pledge F is to begin each day with one short-term goal that you will achieve that day. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something! Find your something!!

- iii. What are you willing to do now?

I. For Pledge G:

i. I cannot stress the importance of rewarding yourself. Granted, a healthier and happier life is a wonderful reward, but we need rewards that we can earn before we get to that point. I reward myself with stars on a calendar (more on that later). One day I had three calories left and really wanted a bedtime snack. I was so close to earning a star that I opted not to have the snack because I wanted that star since it brought me one star closer to my reward. If I didn't have a reward in mind, I would have had the snack and not worried about the star. And, quite possibly, it may have resulted in a binge since I would have been over my calories for the day and felt as if I "blew it."

ii. It's important that rewards are something that you would really enjoy or want very badly so that when you are struggling (like I was above with three calorie left) you have that reward to consider to help you stay focused.

iii. I will share how I reward myself, but don't feel that you need to use this method. This is what works for me; find what works for you. Also, just because I allow myself three or four days off doesn't mean that would be the number of days you should allow yourself. I knew I was capable of staying focused at least six days a week, because I was doing it somewhat regularly anyway. Conversely, when I first started my journey to go to health it would have been nearly impossible to do all of the following things six days a week. I reward myself in the following way:

a. I "earn" a star on my calendar for each day that I drink all my water, exercise at least 30 minutes, don't exceed my caloric limit & don't eat in middle of the night (a real challenge for me!).

b. My reward is gauged in such a way that I'm "allowed" three or four days off days a month. Therefore, three or four days a month I can skip one of the above and still earn my reward. I will allow myself an extra off day while I'm traveling to take into account not being able to drink as much water when I fly and/or having a day off of exercise if I'm over-tired.

c. For each month (or time period) that I reach a specific number of stars on my calendar, I get a reward. When I rewarded myself with a Wii, I had to earn 110 stars in 4 month period.

3. Don't feel that you cannot exceed the pledges that you set for yourself. For instance, if you pledge to drink 16 ounces of water at least four days a week, you most certainly can drink it five, six or seven days a week.

4. The above also applies to your reward method. When I pledged to reward myself when I achieved my pledges 27 days a month (31 days minus the four off days), there was one month when I achieved my pledges more than 27 days. It's okay - and, in fact, strongly encouraged - to outdo yourself.

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