



The big impact of small changes



You've probably heard that old adage about how to eat an elephant (the answer: one bite at a time!). The same advice applies to setting and achieving goals.

While big, sweeping changes like replacing all the food in your kitchen with healthy choices, joining an intensive exercise boot camp or signing up for that meal service from a cable channel infomercial may yield big results, small lifestyle changes are much easier to achieve and maintain and can add up over time.

Here are some examples of some small thing you can add to your day that can add up to powerful, lasting change.

Diet and nutrition

Instead of giving up entire food groups try these easy food choice changes and see what happens

Type and/or amount of food	Reduce to	Calorie savings
2 tablespoons peanut butter	1 tablespoon	94
2 slices of cheese (2 ounces)	1 slice (1 ounce)	113
1 tablespoon butter (3 teaspoons)	2 teaspoons	34
1 tablespoon oil	1 teaspoon	84
2 tablespoons ranch dressing	1 tablespoon	64
4-ounces 85% lean ground beef patty	4-ounces 90% lean	37

Over the course of the day you could reduce up to 426 calories. Keep that up and you'll see positive effects on your weight and health.



Add more activity

You may think that since you work out regularly you needn't worry about doing other activities, but not if you're a couch potato the other 23 hours of the day. Commit to adding 5-10 more minutes of walking each day, take one more set of stairs and stand and stretch throughout your day. The extra steps and activities can really add up to improved health and a happier outlook, while helping you maintain a steady weight.

Get 10,000 steps the smart way

Consider breaking your step goal into three smaller goals throughout the day. If you were to split up 10,000 steps into a 10 minute walk each hour during a normal workday (8-9 hours), that works out to just over 1,000 steps per hour. Add a 10 minute walk before and after work and you'll reach your 10,000-step goal before you know it.

Give yourself a break

Everybody needs a break. They increase motivation and concentration and enhance creativity. Recently, researchers have discovered that frequent short breaks are more effective than longer occasional ones. A 2016 study published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity showed that hourly five-minute walking breaks were more valuable than a single 30-minute walking break. Try to take some of those breaks outdoors. People who walk outdoors report feeling happier and more rested than those who didn't.

Finances

If you want to see how small changes can affect your financial picture, access Fidelity's Power of Smalls tool via the [tools and resources page](#) on Investing at BP [link to tools and resource]. For example, a contribution of \$600 a year – just \$50 a month – can grow to more than \$23,000 after 20 years (assuming the contributions remain in your account until you retire and grow at a rate of 6% per year).



So think small and be patient

While quick weight loss or a big windfall in the stock market can be gratifying, these wins often disappear as quickly as they came. So be realistic and don't try to achieve it all at once. In the meantime to help maintain your motivation, try tracking your positive changes so you can reflect on them – even if the number on the scale takes longer to appear. Celebrate your day-to-day accomplishments, no matter the size. Over time you'll reap the rewards of a healthier lifestyle not to mention all those extra steps. Four million steps anyone?