

Making lasting changes can be tough, but with the right mindset and planning, you can set yourself up for success and create healthy new habits. Use this activity sheet to reflect on what motivates you, spot potential blocks, and plan how to overcome them. **Take it one step at a time and go at your own pace.**

Write down your answers to the questions below and keep them somewhere visible as daily reminders to help you stay on track (for example, on the fridge, in your diary, or in your electronic notes).

1 Find your 'Why'

Think about why lowering your cholesterol matters to you. Is it for more energy, a longer life, or something else? For example, *"to feel more energised and healthy."*

My why is:

2 How will you feel if you improve your cholesterol levels?

Reflect on how healthier cholesterol levels would affect you emotionally. For example, would you feel less anxious and or worried? Would you feel happy, proud or relaxed? Understanding this can help you stay focused on your goals.

When I
succeed
I will feel:

3 Be prepared for challenges ahead

Everyone faces obstacles. It's part of the process. By planning ahead, you'll have solutions ready to help you stay on track. Think about potential challenges, including those you've faced before when making lifestyle changes. For example, *being busy with work, feeling worried or stressed, or going to celebrations where there's lots of food and drink on offer.* **How can you overcome these moments to stay motivated?** For instance, if stress leads to grabbing a chocolate bar, a solution could be: Keep healthy snacks like nuts, yogurt, fruit, and crackers on hand.

My
obstacles:

My
solutions:

See overleaf for some common obstacles and ideas on how you can overcome them.

4 Celebrate your wins – even the small ones!

Celebrate your progress! Whether it's a week of a new habit or improving your cholesterol, take a moment to congratulate yourself. Acknowledging achievements, big or small, can give you a boost and keep you motivated. Treat yourself – perhaps a magazine, a fun app, a trip to the cinema, a new skincare product, or even a massage?

My reward
for staying
on track:



Are you feeling more prepared and motivated?

It's time to move on to [Step 2 - assess](#) your habits and discover where small changes can help improve your cholesterol and heart health.

Obstacle	Solutions
Lack of time to prepare healthy meals.	You could make a weekly meal and shopping plan, batch cook and freeze meals, or find quick and easy recipes to make. If you are stuck and need to go for a ready meal, check the front of pack traffic light labels and choose those that are green (low in) for saturated fat and provide no more than 500kcal per serving.
Craving unhealthy foods or snacks.	Stock up on healthier alternatives like fruit, nuts, or whole-grain snacks. Allow yourself the occasional treat, but try to balance them with healthier options.
Feeling unmotivated or lacking energy to make changes.	Review your diet quiz, and think about new goals to set and steps you can take. Surround yourself with supportive friends or family, or join a community to stay encouraged.
Social gatherings or eating out makes it hard to stick to your plan.	One off-day won't derail your progress, so don't be hard on yourself. Focus on the long-term pattern. If you slip, refocus, remind yourself of your goals, and plan ahead —check menus, choose healthier options, and drink fizzy water to feel full. Celebrate your progress and keep moving forward!
Stress or emotional eating.	Practice stress-relief techniques like deep breathing, walking, or mindfulness. Identify emotional triggers and find healthier ways to cope, like talking to a friend or going for a walk around the block.
Difficulty getting enough physical activity due to a busy life or health concerns.	Start with small, manageable exercises like walking or stretching, and gradually increase the intensity. Set a consistent time each day for movement, even if it's just for 10-15 minutes.
Limited access to healthy food options or affordable ingredients.	Focus on affordable, healthy staples like frozen vegetables, beans, and whole grains. Plan meals around what's in season or on sale, and try bulk buying to save money. Look at our healthy eating on a budget page - www.heartuk.org.uk/budget
Lack of support or feeling isolated in making lifestyle changes.	Find a friend, family member, or online community who have the same goals. Share your progress with them and celebrate achievements together for added accountability.
Setbacks, such as slipping back into old eating habits.	Don't be hard on yourself if you make a mistake. Treat each setback as a learning opportunity. Revisit your goals, adjust your plan if needed, and keep moving forward.
Lack of sleep, which impacts energy levels and cravings.	Prioritise better sleep by setting a bedtime routine, limiting screen time before bed, and creating a calm sleep environment. Good sleep will make it easier to stay motivated and make healthier choices.