

## Four lies you tell yourself about building healthier habits — and how to overcome them

Just because we know what to do to improve ourselves doesn't mean we take action, does it? The good news: we've got four ways to knock down the obstacles in your path to living your best life!



**This report was selected especially for you by Falkenberg-Poetz & Pidhirniak Wealth**

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### Key takeaways

- Make sure the information you get about health matters is credible.
- Create goals that are realistic and attainable to take action and stay on track.
- Even busy people have time to take some healthy actions.

In our lives, we often know with great clarity what we should be doing to get (and stay) on the right path — whether it's managing our wealth or managing our waistlines.

But we don't do it. Instead, it's all too easy to find excuses for why we just can't manage to sock away more for retirement or choose the quinoa over the cake.

The good news: we can bust through those excuses and take steps to lead our best lives for ourselves and the people we care about most. But first we have to get a better sense of how to recognize when we're being our own roadblocks to success.

That's why we reached out to Jaime Hope. She's an attending physician specializing in emergency medicine at one of the busiest emergency departments in the country, and an assistant professor at the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine. Her experiences seeing patients at their worst inspired her to find ways to help people be their best. Her approach to living well involves what she calls the four pillars of health — eat, sleep, burn and release.

Hope knows from experience that to make those pillars ingrained habits, we need to conquer our own excuses. Here are four of the health-related excuses she sees most often among her patients — and what you can do to defeat them. (Oh — there are more, too, which you can read about in her book, *Habit That: How You Can Health Up in Just 5 Minutes a Day*.)

### Excuse #1: I don't know how to apply all the knowledge

If there's a gap in your knowledge, it's hard to feel empowered to make informed, healthy choices. What if you don't know how to use the squat press machine? What if you don't know how to prepare healthy meals? These are legitimate concerns.

The good news is that most knowledge gaps are easily fixable, and if you commit to making a habit of learning, you may even find the process empowering. In other words, instead of giving up on the gym because you don't know how to use the squat machine, keep your promise. Go to the gym and either find something that you do understand or commit to learning something new.

That said, here's the million-dollar question: if you're going to learn, where should you get your information?

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This question is especially relevant when it comes to our food choices — especially given how much conflicting diet advice is out there. One camp tells you to eat nothing but bacon. Another tells you it's all about the carbs. Yet another camp comes out of left field and says eggs are the best food ever. All this advice sounds reasonably legit — and some of it even comes from doctors. So whom do you trust?

Part of building healthy habits is learning to be a filter. When you're out there Googling health-related information, try the following.

1. Recognize your biases.
2. Focus on quality rather than quantity.

This means knowing how to recognize credible sources. The health advice you receive should be:

- free from the influence of lobbying groups or other interests
- based on provable scientific fact
- produced by credible organizations with dedicated professionals in their field

**Pro tip:** with conflicting — and changing — information, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But don't let that feeling become a cop-out. Break down your goals into small actions. Crafting a perfect diet or the perfect workout may sound tough, but drinking more water or eating one green vegetable every day probably sounds much more manageable. Better you do something small than nothing at all.

## Excuse #2: I've already tried a million things

The weight loss industry is worth roughly \$66 billion a year.\* It's safe to say most of us have spent some money on a fitness gadget or two. But that 200 dollars you spent on the vibrating ab belt probably isn't going to do your midsection much good.

Before you give up because past purchases or approaches haven't worked, ask yourself: how legitimate were those diets and devices, and how long did you try them?

Any day you eat healthy can be a great day. But you're being unrealistic if you think eating healthy for two weeks means you should now be 50 pounds lighter. By all means, keep at the healthy eating habits. The weight will come off — don't give up! However, in order to feel successful, you have to make sure your goals align with reality.

**Important.** Diet and exercise are just two of the four pillars of health that Hope has identified. If the other two — sleep and stress — aren't where they should be, you might not be getting your desired results in terms of weight, strength and fitness.

### Excuse #3: I'm doing everything right and I'm still not seeing changes

If you find yourself saying this, ask yourself if you really are doing everything right.

Example: if you drink gallons of whole milk a day because you learned as a kid that “milk does a body good” and you conclude that “eating healthy” makes you fatter (true story, says Hope), it's time to question your assumptions about fat and caloric intake.

\* Source: MarketResearch.com, U.S. Weight Loss Market Worth \$66 Billion, press release dated December 20, 2017.

You've probably noticed there's a lot of misinformation out there when it comes to healthy habits. Competing with actual science are a lot of lobbying and marketing. Some of the hokey stuff we can spot, but some of it is ingrained in us from a young age.

Getting all your facts straight takes time. Check your assumptions and try to learn more where you can. Just because milk is marketed as a healthy food doesn't mean your body wants gallons of it all the time.

Also, if you're counting calories, examine whether you're really on top of your intake. You might be making good choices with the foods you remember to write down (formal breakfast and lunch), but you might be forgetting to note the “impulse” calories — for example, the M&Ms from your co-worker's desk that you grazed on during the day. Whether you remember to write those calories down or not, your body counts them just the same. Those little snacking moments may not sound like much, but they can add up if you're not factoring them in.



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## Excuse #4: I don't have time for this

Modern life has trained us to expect instant results — video on demand, binge watching, instantly calling up just about any song in existence.

Unfortunately, this expectation doesn't work too well when it comes to our bodies. Building healthy habits takes time, and there's no such thing as a quick fix with health. Sure, you might want to just get liposuction every two years to "erase" the fat that you've built up from eating whatever you like. But it doesn't work that way — the liposuction will only get at the fat surrounding our muscles, not the visceral fat around our organs. That second type of fat is addressed only via diet and exercise.

If you're a driven person — personally and/or professionally — you probably don't like to wait for results and might not be accustomed to doing so. But few things in life happen immediately. You don't make partner at a law firm in the first year. Similarly, you don't gain all the weight you don't want overnight — and you can't lose it overnight either.

The year is going to pass anyway. How do you want it to go? No matter what, you're going to accomplish some remarkable stuff throughout the year. So why not create some new healthy habits and make that one of your accomplishments?

**Important:** having little to no free time is a real issue. But for 99 percent of us, our calendar is never going to magically open up. So do what you can and don't beat yourself up about what you can't do at a given moment. As Hope notes, if guilt and self-loathing burned calories, we would all be skinny. Since they don't, be realistic instead.

**Pro tip:** if you work out with your kids, you're spending quality time while teaching your kids to be fit and have fun. Plus, having family gives you built-in workout partners.

## Conclusion

**The upshot.** Before you go down rabbit holes seeking information about what to do to make healthy choices and live a better life, ask yourself: **do I already know what I should be doing? Am I just not taking action?**

You might find that you already have the tools you require — and what you need to do most is overcome the excuses and the roadblocks you have put up in your own path.

## Please feel free to contact us

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