

THE MENTAL MUSINGS

The Psychological Research Newsletter

As the year comes to an end, many of us prepare for a fresh start with grand resolutions. However, some of us may find it to be overwhelming! In this month's issue, we'll explore how to prioritise your goals and stay committed.

New Year, New Me?

Why do we make New Year's Resolutions? The **fresh start effect** gives us a burst of motivation to pursue goals after a meaningful point in time as we make a clear distinction between the past and the present. This helps us to see ourselves in a more positive light, and it can give us the momentum we need to start something we intend to.



But be careful! Waiting for the New Year can lower motivation for goals you're already working on! For example, if

you're already trying to lose weight, making it your New Year's resolution may cause you to slack off now, thinking your future self will handle it. If your resolution overlaps with a current goal, make a new but related one (e.g., picking up a new sport).

Prioritising Resolutions

It's easy to be excited by the potential of the new year and have many goals! Instead of overwhelming ourselves with too many goals or selecting them because they're commonly

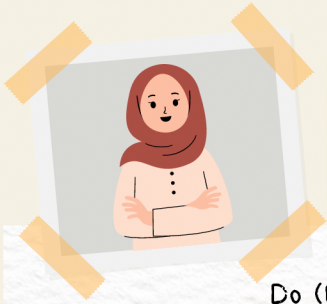
expected of us, we should focus on what really matters to us.

The **Eisenhower Matrix** is a decision-making tool designed to help prioritise tasks and goals by urgency and importance.

Urgent goals need our immediate attention (e.g., addressing a health issue or meeting deadlines), and **Important** goals are those that truly align with our values. Based on this, we can categorise our goals into four priorities:

Priority 1: Do (Urgent & Important)	Priority 2: Schedule (Not Urgent But Important)
Should require our immediate attention	Should be scheduled to be done as they're important for long-term growth
Priority 3: Delegate (Urgent But Not Important)	Priority 4: Delete (Neither Urgent nor Important)
Should be delegated to others, if feasible	Should be eliminated to conserve effort & time

Tip: This can be used for to-do lists as well!



Officer Nadiah has been struggling to decide where to focus her energy for the New Year as she has a lot of things she's been meaning to do. Let's look at how she decides to prioritise her goals!

Do (Urgent & Important)

-Save \$2.5k for family trip at the end of 2025

Action: To start now

Schedule (Not Urgent but Important)

-Start a regular exercise routine

Action: To focus as my main resolution

Delegate (Urgent but not Important)

-Research and choose the best insurance for me and my family

Action: Get a financial advisor to do this

Delete (Neither Urgent nor Important)

-Learn a new language
-Lose 5kg
-Read 3 books per month

Action: To remove

Maintaining Resolutions

After prioritising your resolutions, it's important to take some steps to stay on track. Here are some tips to help! Let's see how Nadiah is preparing to stick to one of her resolutions.

Resolution: To start a regular exercise routine

1) Break down resolutions into behaviours

- I will buy a gym package and attend at least one exercise class weekly.

2) Specify when and where you will start your action plan

- I will buy the package from Gym A at 8pm today and book my first class for the first Saturday in January via their booking app.

3) Find ways to make goal pursuit fun/enjoyable whenever possible

- I will take up Zumba classes because it looks fun and other exercises don't appeal to me as much.
- If I do not enjoy Zumba, I will try Pilates as my second choice.

4) Monitor your progress regularly to keep your goals fresh in your mind

- I have set automated reminders on my phone to remind me to book a class.

5) Plan for obstacles and how to overcome them

- I choose Gym A as they have a cancellation fee policy and an expiry on class packages, which will encourage me to use up my classes.
- I will create a Savings Goal on my banking app to reserve a fixed amount of money, to ensure that I can afford these classes throughout the year.
- If financial issues arise, I will switch to at-home videos on YouTube.

6) Share your resolution with people who share similar values

- I will update my progress with my husband as he cares about my health.





While Nadiah recognises the challenges ahead, she feels better prepared to stick to her goals this year after thoughtful planning. We hope these tips will provide guidance as you set your own resolutions. Remember that setbacks are a natural part of growth, and even small steps forward are worth celebrating. Happy holidays!

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