

Leyla Weighs In: Turning intention into action



When it comes to good health practices, we all have the best intentions, right? We *try* to avoid making excuses to skip exercise, *think* twice before reaching for that second helping of dinner—or second glass of wine, and *try* not to cruise the internet, social media or watch TV into the wee hours.

We *think* and we *try* but we don't always *do*. Part of the struggle is how we've set up our environment to encourage our choices and actions. Taking a closer look at our surroundings can offer important clues on how environment encourages certain behaviors.



For example, what size is your tableware? If your dinner plates resemble bistro platters or chargers rather than reasonably sized dishes, you may be encouraged to eat more. Believe it or not, your perception of hunger could be reduced by simply changing your tableware to smaller size dishes. Then you can enjoy that second helping because, overall, your portions are smaller.

Is there a television in your bedroom? That can fuel the habit of watching late night TV shows and news programs. Not to mention that smart phone or tablet you keep on the night

table. All that blue light from those screens will delay any production of melatonin—inhibiting sleep. Banish them all from the bedroom and let yourself decompress and sleep in total darkness. Your immune system and your waistline will thank you!

Designate an area of your home for exercise. Whether it's to set up a whole body gym or just enough room for a yoga mat, make it an inviting place to encourage exercise.

Just can't resist the aromas wafting out of that bakery or pizzeria on your way home from work? Take a different route. Avoiding the cues that lure you is a good strategy for staying on the straight and narrow.

Changing your environment to reflect your best intentions will go a long way to making them actionable.

To your health!