

Finding motivation

Motivation is what drives us to make the things we want happen – but staying motivated isn't always easy. Get some tips on how to find (and to keep!) motivation, and suggestions for what to do if you just can't get into gear.

Why motivation is important

To make things you want to do or achieve happen, you need motivation. Motivation is what drives you towards a goal, gets you up in the morning, and keeps you working through a task, determined to succeed when things get tough.

Everything that could possibly motivate you can fit into one of two categories:

- › *Positive motivations, which focus on the positive things that will happen when you take action. e.g. 'Finishing this assignment means I'm one step closer to being qualified.'*
- › *Negative motivations, which focus on the negative backlash that will occur if you don't take action. e.g. 'if I don't finish this assignment in the next few hours I will fail.'*

Both negative and positive motivation can be effective in different circumstances. However, people are much more successful when they're doing something because they actually want to, rather than if they're acting to avoid an outcome they don't want. That means positive motivation usually has a bigger and better impact.

Negative motivation can sometimes be quite dangerous. That's because it only works if you know the exact steps you are going to take to reach your goal. If you don't have a positive plan of action, using negative motivation to approach a task can make you feel really helpless, and actually reduce your motivation.

Knowing how to find effective motivation strategies is really important to getting stuff done.

Tips for finding/keeping motivated

Set goals. When you set a goal you make a decision to act upon what you want. This gives you a direction to focus on – one that's measurable and has an end point; all factors which can help a person stay motivated.

Choose goals that interest you. You're much more likely to stay motivated if you are working towards something that you genuinely want to do or achieve.

Finding motivation can help with...

- › *Figuring out your goals*
- › *Achieving your goals*
- › *Getting stuff done*

Take action...

- › *Don't rely only on you. Call someone you trust now*
- › *Remember that nobody is motivated ALL the time*
- › *Read how others have stayed motivated*

Find things that interest you within goals that don't. Sometimes other people set us goals or tasks that we don't find interesting / want. So, try and find something within that task that does motivate you. E.g. 'I hate maths, but it's going to help me become a builder, which I want more than anything.'

Make your goal public. If you state you are doing something to someone else, or write it down, you've essentially promised to keep your word.

Plot your progress. When you are working towards something, it can be really motivating if you can see evidence that you are making progress. Draw / create a visual representation of how you are coming closer to achieving something.

Break up your goal. Start with easier tasks and work your way up to bigger challenges. Breaking up a task in your mind into achievable chunks helps build confidence.

Use rewards. Promise yourself some sort of reward each time you complete a step/task.

Don't do it alone. Join a class, find a teacher or someone with whom you can share the experience. Other people's encouragement to keep going can be a big boost to your motivation, particularly when you're doing it tough.

Learn how to use positive self-talk.

If you're really finding it hard to stay motivated

If you've tried all these things, and just can't get motivated, then it might help to talk it through with someone that you trust. It can be really hard to achieve things on our own, and having a good support network when you're working through a big challenge is really important.

You could also try talking to a counsellor. They are great at helping people work out which motivating strategies will work best for them.