

## Willpower to help with your New Year's Resolution!

We have many common names for willpower: determination, drive, resolve, self-discipline, self-control. But psychologists characterize willpower, or self-control, in more specific ways. According to most psychological scientists, willpower can be defined as:

- the ability to delay gratification, resisting short-term temptations in order to meet long-term goals
- the capacity to override an unwanted thought, feeling or impulse
- the ability to employ a “cool” cognitive system of behavior rather than a “hot” emotional system
- conscious, effortful regulation of the self by the self
- a limited resource capable of being depleted

Many people believe they could improve their lives if only they had more of that mysterious thing called willpower. With more self-control we would all eat right, exercise regularly, avoid drugs and alcohol, save for retirement, stop procrastinating, and achieve all sorts of noble goals.

Recent research suggests some ways in which willpower can in fact be strengthened with practice. Lack of willpower isn't the only reason you might fail to reach your goals. Willpower researcher Roy Baumeister, PhD, a psychologist at Florida State University, describes three necessary components for achieving objectives: First, he says, you need to establish the motivation for change and set a clear goal. Second, you need to monitor your behavior toward that goal. The third component is willpower. Whether your goal is to lose weight, kick a smoking habit, study more, or spend less time on Facebook, willpower is a critical step to achieving that outcome.

Source and full article: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/willpower.aspx>



**“I’m prescribing a diet patch to repair the leak in your willpower.”**

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