

CREATING NEW HEALTHY HABITS

We all know what it's like to start a new habit and then give up. We need to repeat a new habit often enough for it to become part of our daily routine. Use the strategies below to stick to your plan and develop healthy habits!



VISUALISE SUCCESS

Spend time reflecting on what you want to achieve. Imagining what success looks like keeps you motivated.



FOCUS ON THE FIRST STEP

Every behaviour is the result of many small decisions leading to action. Just start with the first step. Then focus on the next small step. With each small action you build momentum to keep going.



If your goal is healthy eating, focus on buying fruit and vegetables, filling your water bottle, and preparing healthy meals. If your goal is to get fit, focus on putting on sports shoes, then focus on leaving the house, then on running, etc.



FOCUS ON ONE HABIT AT A TIME

You can be more disciplined when you focus on forming one new habit rather than trying to make too many changes at the same time. Once you've formed a firm habit, then move on to the next thing you want to change.



MAKE IT ENJOYABLE

It is harder to stick to new habits if you don't like doing them. Choose a habit that you enjoy, find something about the habit you can enjoy, or identify something positive about doing it.



Focus on how satisfied you feel having done it, how proud you feel about not giving up when it got tough, or on improvements in your performance.



START SMALL

Set a small goal so that it is easy to achieve. Then when you build up a habit you can increase the goal (e.g. run 10 minutes a day; then when that habit is established, increase it to 20 minutes.)



USE SELF-TALK TO SUCCEED

Some thoughts lead to quitting (e.g. "I'll do it tomorrow", "I can't do this, it's too hard"). Thoughts are only thoughts - you don't have to pay attention to them. Choose to ignore unhelpful thoughts and replace them with encouraging self-talk like: "You can do this", "It's not easy, but you're getting better at this", "This helps you be the person you want to".



KEEP IT POSITIVE

Phrase your goal in positive language (i.e. eat more healthy food) rather than negative (i.e. avoid junk food). Positive language reminds you what you need to do; what action is required (e.g. eat more fruit and vegetables, exercise more, practice guitar, etc).



SHARE YOUR GOAL

Telling family or friends about your new habit can increase your motivation to succeed. Their encouragement can help you stick to the plan. Not wanting others to see you fail can actually push you to keep going when it gets difficult too.



BE GUIDED BY YOUR VALUES

Our values express what's important to us and what sort of a person we want to be. Like a compass, values guide our behaviour. When your new habit aligns with your values, you are more likely to achieve your desired behaviour change.



You are more likely to succeed in increasing physical exercise if you value being healthy rather than just wanting to lose weight.



YOUR ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

Surround yourself with people and things that support your behaviour change. Remove items that encourage old unhealthy habits. If your goal is to exercise, keep sports shoes out where you see them often.



For a healthier diet – fill a fruit bowl, keep your water bottle filled, and don't bring junk food home.