

Habit Change How-to

By now we know all about healthy habits—eat more veggies; drink more water, less alcohol; don't smoke and exercise. But, information does not change your health, behavior modification does! So stop willing yourself to change and look at the science of how to change your habits.

Are you looking for comfort in food? Numbness in wine? An outlet or connection online? Stress alleviation through eating or nail biting? You can figure it out—and you'll have some good ideas about how to switch it up for healthier outcomes.

1. Identify the habit you want to change

- Bring awareness to what is usually unconscious (or at least ignored)
- Do not beat yourself up about it

What is the habit you wish to change?

2. What is the benefit of the habit?

- In other words, how is your habit serving you?

What is the benefit of the habit?

3. Honor your own wisdom

- Realize you do have the answers and are capable of doing something different
- Build something into your schedule that will provide what you really want

How can I **add** in a new behavior that reaps benefits and aligns with my goals?

4. Choose something to replace the unhealthy habit

- Willpower does not address the underlying benefit of the behavior you want to replace

Choose a **replacement** behavior that will deliver the same benefit and aligns with my goals.

Example

- 1. I want to change my habit of snacking on free food in the Cafe when I am not hungry*
- 2. The benefit is that eating distracts me from my stressful job*
- 3. I can take a 5 minute break to listen to my favorite song*
- 4. I can replace the snack with a hydrating beverage*

5. Remove triggers

- Your environment is a powerful influence
- So are the people you spend the most time with

What is in your space that is triggering the behavior you want to change?

Who is inspiring your wellness habits? Who is sabotaging them?

6. Visualize yourself changing

- Think differently about your ability to change
- Picture yourself as the healthy person you want to be

Describe your vision of wellness as if you have already achieved it.

7. Monitor your negative self-talk

- The refrain in your brain can seriously affect your default behaviors
- Reframe the negative talk, because your brain is listening

What is a negative thought you have about yourself? How can you reframe it?

8. Take baby steps

- Make your plan for habit change doable, it does not have to be all or nothing
- Be gentle with yourself, build confidence and feel the good vibes of accomplishment

How much time and energy can I realistically devote to the habit you want to change?

Example

- 5. The candy jar on the counter; my sister who always brings me home baked cookies; my coworker who shares her recipes for easy meal prep*
- 6. I am a wellness warrior who chooses foods that fuel my energy everyday*
- 7. Replace “I failed” with “I accept my mistakes and learn from them”*
- 8. I can exercise for 10 minutes 4 days a week*