

Healthy Habits - Tips for Behavioral Change

Positive Self-Affirmations

- Changing Your Inner Dialogue
 - Step 1: Self Observation
 - Observe what you say to yourself, people are very good at criticizing and finding flaws within themselves. Most of these thoughts go completely unnoticed.
 - Step 2: Start a New Inner Dialogue
 - Identify positive statements that could replace the negative ones.
 - Write these down and put them somewhere easy to be reminded of.
 - Step 3: Practice Makes Perfect
 - As silly as it sounds, schedule time to think these thoughts. The more often you practice the faster they will naturally replace negative thoughts.

The Behavior Chain

- Unhealthy habits are behaviors that are rarely done in isolation. Rather, it's the last link in a chain of events that could lead to unhealthy habits.
 - Example: Work a 12 Hour Day -> Feel Tired -> Rationalize Skipping The Gym -> Treat Yourself After A Long Day -> Buy Ice Cream -> Eat The Whole Pint -> Feel Sick And Guilty
- Breaking the chain can be done anywhere before the unhealthy habit to result in a more favorable outcome.
 - Example: It may be rational to skip the gym, but going for a long walk with your dog when you get home will still allow you to get exercise and avoid the guilt at the end of the day.

Relapse Prevention

- Whether you are trying to quit smoking or improve your exercise routine, it is important to note that relapse is usually a natural part of the process. That being said, there are plenty of ways to help prevent this occurrence.
 - Identify High Risk Situations
 - Have A Plan In Mind
 - Practice How You Will Respond
 - Know The Warning Signs Of Relapse From Previous Experiences
 - Avoid Judgement Of Yourself If You Do Relapse
 - Take Action Immediately Rather Than Waiting Till Tomorrow

Create SMART Goals

- Goals are a crucial part of any health related change, but not all goals are created equally. Set them too rigidly and we will feel failure frequently. Set them too easily and we won't feel accomplishment. SMART goals are designed to help you determine the best goal for your situation.
 - S – Specific
 - Setting a goal of “drink more water” is not specific enough to help guide your actions. Setting a goal of “drink 3 glasses of water and stop drinking coffee by noon” is far more likely to help you identify what you need to be doing.
 - M – Measurable
 - Find a goal that can be calculated easily. Abstract ideas are great but can be disappointing when it is difficult to see progress.
 - A – Achievable
 - Is it within your power to accomplish this goal? “Getting a promotion” is a great idea, but may not be up to you.
 - R – Realistic
 - Make goals that are realistic, but challenging. Setting a goal of “going to the gym 7 days a week” will likely end in disappointment (or injury). Know yourself, and push yourself a little bit at a time.
 - T – Timely
 - Make sure you know your timeline and set goals that are not far in the future. Setting yearlong goals gives too much time to put things off. Setting 12 different month long goals or 52 week long goals will be far more likely to elicit accomplishments.
- My SMART Goals:
 - 1:

 - 2:

 - 3: