

MAKING WELLNESS WORK FOR YOU

Third Edition, 2009

Would you like to improve your level of wellness?

The process outlined in the following steps is supported by research on effective ways to change health behavior. This guide will help you improve your wellness level and reduce your risk of lifestyle-related disease and premature death.

Just follow these steps...

STEP 1 – Which Behavior do you want to Change?

Unless you have a behavior that requires immediate medical intervention, it is usually best to choose a simple behavior to change. As you gain experience with the behavior change process, you will be better able to successfully change more challenging behaviors. Refer to your TestWell® assessment for valuable self-change ideas.

Which behavior do you want to change? _____

STEP 2 – What are the Benefits of Changing this Behavior?

Identifying the benefits of your new behavior will help increase your motivation to change this behavior.

Examples:

- I will be happier
- I will have more time to spend with my family and friends
- My life will be less stressful.
- I will enjoy a higher quality of life.

Identify personal benefits you anticipate from this behavior change:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

STEP 3 – What are Your Behavior Change Goals?

Realistic and achievable goals are the foundation for a successful healthy behavior change. A long term goal identifies the desired overall behavior change, whereas short term goals allow the task to be broken into smaller, more manageable steps. As short-term goals are accomplished, the long-term goal is achieved.

Long term goal: Identify the overall target for behavior change.

Example: I will manage my time to allow one hour per day for enjoyment.

What is your long term goal?: _____

Short term goals: Identify short term goals that will create a step-by-step plan to achieve your goal.

Examples:

- I will make time for enjoyment a priority.
- I will create a “to do” list each day.
- I will arrange my “to do” list by priority.
- I will estimate the time needed to complete each task.
- I will make a “do-able” list for each day.

What are your short term goals?:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 4 – Are You Ready to Change?

It is difficult to accomplish a successful behavior change if you are not ready to commit to a change.

If you answer “no” to any of the questions in the following Target Behavior Test, you might consider altering your environment or priorities, consider choosing another behavior which appeals to you more or set a more achievable goal that allows you to answer “yes” to all questions in the Target Behavior Test.

How Ready Are You?

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| 1. Changing this behavior is important to me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| 2. I have a positive attitude about my ability to successfully change this behavior. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| 3. I am likely to be healthier or live in a healthier environment if I change this behavior. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| 4. If necessary, I am able or willing to spend the money required to help change this behavior. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| 5. I am willing to devote the time necessary to change this behavior. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| 6. I have chosen a target goal that I will be able to measure or count. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| 7. I have selected an achievable goal. (e.g., “I will lose one pound per week by increasing my level of exercise” is probably a realistic goal. “I will lose twenty pounds this month” is probably an unrealistic goal and may be unsafe.” | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| 8. I can identify others who will provide support for my behavior change. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |

STEP 5 – What Are the Helpers and Hurdles to This Behavior Change?

Identifying strategies is a three-part process. First, list ideas for possible strategies to achieve your goal. Next, consider the obstacles that might keep you from reaching your goal. Finally, consider ways to overcome such obstacles.

Examples of Helpers:

- I will schedule fun things so they become part of my daily routine.
- I will join a fitness program and arrange for a personal trainer.
- I will purchase only heart-healthy foods.
- I will change jobs to allow more time with family and friends.

A. List your helpers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Identify hurdles that can potentially hinder you in your behavior change process.

Examples of Hurdles:

- Unexpected things may happen that will interfere with my scheduled fun time.
- I may not be able to afford the membership and personal trainer.
- Sometimes I don't seem to have enough will-power.
- Financially, I need to keep my job because it pays very well.

B. List your possible hurdles to achieving your goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List ways to overcome the hurdles you have just identified. Being prepared to overcome obstacles will increase your likelihood of achieving success.

Examples of solutions to overcome hurdles:

- I will adjust other priorities rather than eliminate my free time.
- I will search for less expensive options for exercise.
- I will arrange for positive social support and remember past success when faced with obstacles.
- I will cut back on other expenditures and make my health change a top priority.

C. List your solutions for overcoming your hurdles:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 6 – What Will Be Your Best Helper?

Select the strategy or strategies that you believe will be most successful, one that you are willing to commit to.

Record your selected helper: _____

Step 7 – How Can You Alter Your Surroundings to Support Change?

The people and things that are around you can greatly influence your behavior. You are more likely to succeed by creating supportive surroundings. Examine your support system (work atmosphere, home environment, family, and friends) and alter these surroundings to eliminate obstacles and increase positive support for achieving your goals.

A. How will you create a work atmosphere or home environment in which there are fewer hurdles and greater desire to engage in the new behavior?

Example: Share work and home responsibilities with others.

B. How Will You Build a Support Network for Yourself?

Examples:

- I will spend time with other people who share similar interests.
- I will ask a family member or friend to provide relief from child care so I have time for relaxation each day.
- I will ask my supervisor to positively acknowledge my successful efforts to manage my work efficiently.

C. Enlist the support of a few friends. Try using the following contract for behavior change.

Contract for Behavior Change			
I, _____, pledge to meet the following goal: _____.			
My friend, who has signed this contract below, agrees to support me in the following ways:			
1. _____			
2. _____			
3. _____			
We will meet on _____(date), to discuss my behavior change progress and to confirm support for my behavior change efforts.			
_____ Your Signature	_____ Date	_____ Signature of Supporting Friend	_____ Date

Step 8 – What Will Be Your Reward?

Choose enjoyable, positive rewards to motivate yourself to a successful behavior change. Make sure you reward yourself for the attainment of your short term goals as well as your long term goals. Rewards can be both external and internal, e. g., positive thoughts about efforts and success.

Hints about rewards:

- Take care to reward yourself with external rewards and positive thoughts about your efforts and successes.
- Reward yourself as quickly as possible when you are successful.
- Adjust your rewards as necessary.
- When you first begin to change your behavior, reward yourself each time you are successful; after your target behavior is well-established, reward yourself less frequently.
- Practice thinking positively about your decision to change, courage to change, determination to persist, and how you have succeeded in past efforts to make changes, despite challenges.

List rewards appropriate for accomplishing your short term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List the reward for accomplishing your long term goal:

1. _____

Examples of rewards:

- I will rent a videotape and invite friends to my home to watch it with me.
- I will take a relaxing bicycle ride with a friend.
- I will tell myself how well I am doing and think about how I feel better, physically and mentally.
- I will treat myself to a massage.

Step 9 – Work Your Plan and Record Your Progress

It is time to actually begin your behavior change. As a brief review:

1. Consider the benefits of your behavior change.
2. Be clear about your goals.
3. Use helpers that you believe will be successful.
4. Plan to encounter and overcome hurdles.
5. Alter your environment to support your lifestyle changes.
6. Be sure to reward yourself.
7. Have fun.

Record your progress as you work through your behavior change.

Record keeping can help you to be successful. By observing your progress you can discover reasons for success or failure.

Use the following behavior tracking chart, or your own custom-designed chart, to document your progress.

Update your chart regularly and use it to identify not only your progress, but also the situations that promote the behavior and those that discourage the behavior.

Behavior Tracking Chart					
Date	What I planned to do	What I did	Why it happened the way it did		How I can overcome this obstacle in the future
			What helped me	What got in my way	
Example: 10/20/92	Make a "to do" list	Made my "to do" list	Made my list before I went to bed last night	---	---
Example: 10/21/92	Make my leisure time a priority	Gave up my leisure time to care for my ill child	---	My child became ill and caring for my child became a priority	I will ask a friend or relative to stay with my child while I enjoy my leisure time

Step 10 – What Can you Do to Make Adjustments for Next Time?

If, after reviewing your tracking system, you determine your success is not occurring as you had hoped, review your goals, barriers, and social support network and make appropriate adjustments. Remember, persistence is important. However, if the behavior change process is all work and no fun and you are beginning to dread the change or feel like quitting, it is probably time to alter your approach.

Example: I feel guilty about having time to relax and therefore do not enjoy my time. Until I have given myself enough time to rethink relaxation time, I will participate in activities that have a dual purpose-relaxation and quality family time.

Most people are not successful in their first attempt to modify health behaviors. Learning from failures and being persistent are two qualities of people who are ultimately successful!