

Making Wellness Work For You

Would you like to know *how* to improve your level of wellness?

The plan outlined on the following pages will guide and assist you in improving your level of well-being, which will potentially reduce your risk of premature death from lifestyle-related diseases.

Follow each step...

STEP 1 ➤ Select a Behavior to Change

Unless you have a behavior that is life-threatening, it is usually best to begin with a simple behavior that you would like to change. As you gain experience with the behavior change process, you will be in a better position to successfully change more complex behaviors.

A. Identify a target behavior that you want to change:

1. _____

Example: I want to have more time to relax and enjoy life.

STEP 2 ➤ Identify the Benefits of Changing This Behavior

Identifying the benefits of your new behavior will increase your motivation for wanting to achieve this behavior change.

A. Identify the benefits of your behavior change:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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.*

STEP 3 ➤ Identify Your 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 units that seem easier to achieve. Little by little, as the short-term goals are accomplished, the long-term goal is achieved.

A. Identify your long-term goal:

1. _____

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

B. Identify your short-term goals:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Examples:

- *I will make my 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.*

STEP 4 ➤ Take the Target Behavior Test

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, it is important that you either consider choosing another behavior which appeals to you or set a more achievable goal that allows you to answer "yes" to all questions in the Target Behavior Test.

A. Target Behavior Test

1. Changing this behavior is important to me. Yes No
2. I have a positive attitude about my ability to successfully change this behavior. Yes No
3. I am likely to be healthier or live in a healthier environment if I change this behavior. Yes No
4. If necessary, I am able and willing to spend the money necessary to help change this behavior. Yes No
5. I am willing to devote the time necessary to change this behavior. Yes No
6. I have chosen a target behavior that I will be able to measure or count. Yes 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.) Yes No
8. I can identify others who will provide support for my behavior change. Yes No

STEP 5 ➤ Identify Strategies for Accomplishing Your Goal

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.

A. List possible strategies for achieving your goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples:

- I will schedule fun things so they become part of my daily routine.
- I will make a "to do" list.
- I will remain focused on my lists and tasks at hand.
- I will quit my job.

B. List possible obstacles to achieving your goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples:

- Unexpected things may happen that will interfere with my scheduled fun time.
- Some things on my "to do" list may take longer than expected.
- My children's needs may take precedence.
- Financially, I need to work and collect a paycheck.

C. List solutions for overcoming your obstacles:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples:

- I will adjust other priorities rather than eliminate my free time.
- I will remember to prioritize unexpected things as well as expected things.
- I understand that at times of illness my children's needs may take precedence; however, I will make a special effort to find enjoyable activities for me that my children can participate in.
- I will ask my supervisor to assist me in becoming more productive and time efficient.

STEP 6 ➤ Select a Strategy

Select the strategy with the most manageable obstacles. A strategy with unmanageable obstacles will most likely lead to failure.

A. Record your selected strategy:

1. _____

STEP 7 ➤ Alter Your Surroundings for Change

The people and things that are around you can greatly influence your behavior. By creating supportive surroundings, behavior change can be a successful and satisfying process. Examine your support system (work atmosphere, home environment, family, friends) and alter these surroundings to assist you in achieving your goals.

A. How will you create a work atmosphere and a home environment in which it is both difficult to practice the "old" behavior and easy to practice the new behavior?

1. _____
2. _____

Example: Share work and home responsibilities with others.

B. How will you build a support network for yourself?

1. _____
2. _____

Examples:

- *I will spend time with other people who share similar recreation interests.*
- *I will ask a family member or friend to provide relief from child care so that I might 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 signed this contract below, agrees to provide me with the following supportive actions:			
1. _____			
2. _____			
3. _____			
We will meet on _____ (date), to discuss my behavior change progress and to confirm support for my behavior change efforts.			
_____ <i>Your Signature</i>	_____ <i>Date</i>	_____ <i>Signature of Supporting Friend</i>	_____ <i>Date</i>

STEP 8 ➤ Reward Yourself

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.

Hints about rewards:

- *Take care to reward yourself appropriately for your achievements.*
- *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.*

A. List rewards appropriate for accomplishing your short-term goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. List the reward for accomplishing your long-term goal:

1. _____

- Examples:
- *I will rent a videotape and invite friends to my home to watch it with me.*
 - *I will visit the library and select an interesting book for leisure-time reading.*
 - *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 ➤ Implement Your Strategies 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 behavior change strategies that you believe will be successful.
4. Plan to encounter and overcome obstacles.
5. Alter your environment to support your lifestyle changes.
6. Be sure to reward yourself.
7. Have fun.

A. Use the following Tracking Chart, or your own custom-designed chart, to record 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: 2/20/97	Have a daily "to do" list	Prepare the "to do" list the night before	Having the list first thing in the morning helped	-----	-----
Example: 2/21/97	Prioritize my "to do" list	I did not prioritize my list	-----	Although I worked on my list, I did not get done what I needed to do.	I will set priorities when I prepare my list

STEP 10 ➤ Make Adjustments

If, after reviewing your tracking system, you determine that your success is not occurring as you had hoped, review your goals, barriers, and social support 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 may be 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.*

GOOD LUCK!