

Effective Behaviour Change

Most people know what they “should” do to live a healthy and happy life. To be fitter and healthier, for example, everyone knows they should eat less fat/sugar/salt, eat more fruit and vegetables, and exercise more. The reality is it's not rocket science. But why, then, do so few people do these things well?

The answer is because so few people have an effective system in place. If you want to develop healthier habits try these simple, but powerful strategies.

1. Set SMART - ER goals

SMART stands for **s**pecific; **m**easurable; **a**chievable; **r**elevant and **t**imed. In addition, it's important to “stretch” yourself and also to **e**valuate and **r**eview your progress regularly.

2. Have “happy hour” every day

Do something fun, pleasurable, enjoyable, satisfying and/or stimulating every day. And preferably, make it a routine.

3. Focus on the good

Remind yourself of the benefits of taking effective action and of engaging in activities that will enhance your health and happiness (especially if they might not be realised in the short term).

4. Love yourself for being SMART

Reward yourself for making positive changes, for trying to engage in healthy and productive activities, or simply just for trying. Doing so will significantly increase your chances of continuing helpful habits in the long term.

5. Make it fun with others

Find a “buddy” with whom to exercise, challenge negative thoughts, engage in good deeds or whatever. Most activities are more enjoyable with a supportive friend and if they're more enjoyable you'll find you're more likely to keep them up.

If you think you'd benefit from a more detailed explanation of these principles, consider Dr. Sharp's “The Happiness Handbook” as well as The Happiness Institute's series of happiness workbooks.