

Feeling Stuck? Use This Worksheet to

Change a Habit!

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You can use this worksheet to help you change any habit. Use one copy for each habit you'd like to change.

1. List one habit you'd like to focus on at this time:

(Examples: walk 1 mile, lift weights 3 days per week, add a vegetable to every meal, reduce carbs by xyz grams per day, eat 1 protein at each meal, reduce calories to xyz kcal. Be as specific as you can.)

2. From the list below, select which stage describes you best.

3. Read the descriptions and circle the things you can do to help you move to the next stage.

Not thinking about it

In this stage, you are not even thinking about making the change (walking, adding a vegetable, etc.). Give yourself some grace for being here, and allow yourself to think about the new habit even if you're not doing the habit yet.

- Consider thinking more about the habit.
- List how doing the new habit could improve your life or your outlook.
- Do you see other people doing the new habit? What looks good about the new habit?
- Be honest and list what you think you would not like about doing the new habit.

Thinking about it

If you think about the new habit, but you haven't actually started doing it yet, you are here! This is a valuable stage. At least you recognize that the new habit would benefit you.

- List the barriers to enacting the new habit.
- Problem-solve one of the barriers. For example, if you don't eat green vegetables because you don't like them, one possible approach is to try some non-green vegetables.
- Learn more about the new habit: Read up on it or watch videos about it. Knowledge is power.
- Take some time to identify ways you could make small changes. For example, if you want to become more physically active, one way to become more active is to stand up and walk around the house during television commercials. You might not do it yet, but at least you have identified what you could do when you're ready.

□ **Doing the new habit sometimes**

You really want to develop this new habit (being more active, eating healthier), and you actually are doing it some of the time, but you are not doing it regularly.

- Think about what works for you. When you *are* able to practice the new habit, what makes it possible?
- List the benefits of doing the habit even more regularly.
- Identify ways to increase the number of times you practice the new habit. You might block out times on your calendar or set a reward system that works for you. Be realistic.
- Identify one way to make the new habit a priority.
- Reward yourself when you take small steps toward doing your habit more regularly.

□ **Doing the new habit regularly**

If you have been implementing the new habit regularly, but you've been doing it for less than 6 months, you are in this stage. Good for you!

- Brainstorm ways to make your habit consistent.
- Identify barriers and high-risk situations and problem-solve them. These might include bad weather, your travel schedule, the holidays, your family's schedule, your grocery shopping habits, or your budget.
- Identify a realistic next step. Make sure it is doable.
- Congratulate yourself for getting this far, and reward yourself if that helps you keep going.

□ **Maintaining the new habit regularly**

You have been successfully implementing the habit for at least 6 months. You've figured out how to accomplish it even when unexpected things happen.

- If you're working on physical activity, you might want to try new activities or add more vigorous activities to keep from getting bored.
- If you're working on healthy eating, you might want to refine your plans or tweak one part of your eating habits.
- Try to stay positive when things don't go as you have planned. If you experience a lapse, jump back on track as soon as you are able.

Whatever stage you're in, give yourself some grace for being there! You'll be in some stages longer than others. It is very normal to be in the early stages for months at a time.

It often helps to list the pros and cons of making a change. Once the pros become more important to you, you're likely to move along in this process.

You might move back and forth between stages, and when you do, consider what has worked for you in the past: How might you apply something from that past success to help you overcome the new hurdle?

Embrace your stage and your journey toward the next one.

This worksheet is based on the body of work by James Prochaska, summarized at <http://web.uri.edu/cprc/detailed-overview/> and including Prochaska, J.O., & Velicer, W.F. (1997). The Transtheoretical Model of health behavior change. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 12 (1), 38-48.