

## WEEK 1

# UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE



### STAGES OF CHANGE THEORY

Meaningful change regarding most things, including the habits that impact our health, don't just happen instantly. Making changes that last is a process that takes time, practice, trial and error, and patience. Research has shown that there are clear steps or "stages" that we all navigate on our way to real change.

### MINDFULNESS

John Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as "The awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally." Think of it as choosing to pay attention, right now, to what you are currently thinking, feeling and experiencing in your body and calmly observing these without judging them, but instead with an attitude of openness, curiosity and acceptance.

One of the primary goals of this program is to help you raise your awareness - with openness and curiosity, NOT judgement, of where you are regarding each of the healthy habits, and what may be getting in your way. This awareness will allow you to more effectively make real changes that truly work for you. Maintaining this awareness throughout your life will allow you to more quickly recognize challenges or set backs so that you can get back on your healthy habits plan faster - and that is the key to success in improving maintaining your health long term!



### GOAL SETTING STRATEGIES

Macro vs. Micro goals: Create an idea, or mental picture of what you envision your overall healthy lifestyle looks like for you. Then, break big ideas into smaller manageable pieces involving each of the 5 core healthy habits.

Implementation goals instead of outcomes goals: As you go through this course learning and discussing the concepts, focus on the things you want to do to live healthier (Ex: plan healthy balanced meals, or exercise 3-5 times per week).

### KEEPING TRACK

Research shows that people are more successful when they consistently keep track of behaviors they are trying to change. It requires you to focus on and mark in some way what you eat, drink and do - increasing awareness and accountability. There are many ways to keep track - try different methods to find what works for you.

## WEEK 1...CONTINUED

# UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE



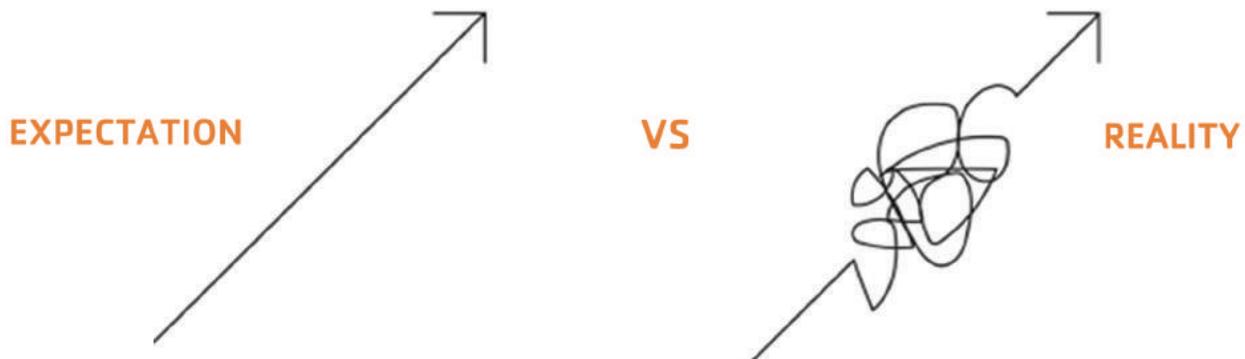
### HEALTHY HABITS COACH TIP

Getting off track will happen, and shouldn't be viewed as failure. Progress includes being able to recognize where you have gotten off track more quickly, and then problem-solving what you need to do to get back on track in a way that works well for you.

### STAGES OF CHANGE AS A CONTINUOUS SPIRAL



### STAGES OF CHANGE AS A CONTINUOUS SPIRAL



## WEEK 2

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 1



## WHY IS EXERCISE IMPORTANT?

### PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

- Helps control weight; burns calories and maintains muscle mass.
- Strengthens muscles and bones.
- Improves the ability to do daily activities.
- Reduces your risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and some cancers.
- Improves sleep quality.

### MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

- Reduces stress
- Improves mood; helps you feel better generally, relieves mild to moderate anxiety / depression.
- Improves or maintains brain health - helps thinking, learning and judgement skills.

## HOW MUCH AND WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE IS NEEDED?

- Adults should move more and sit less throughout the day. Some physical activity is better than none.  
Adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits.
- For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150-300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75-150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or some combination of the two.
- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or greater intensity and that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits.



What could an effective weekly plan look like for you?

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2018.

## THREE WAYS TO ASSESS EXERCISE INTENSITY

### PHYSICAL RESPONSE

Heart rate, breathing rate and sweating: Are these at resting levels, only slightly elevated, or significantly elevated. We will get into specific heart rate guidelines in session 8, for now just pay attention to whether it seems slightly elevated, or more significantly elevated.

### RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE) SCALE

Numbers 0-10 are correlated with descriptions of exercise intensity levels, Use the scale to describe how hard you feel like you are working.

### TALK TEST

Reflects how hard you are breathing by how well you can use your voice. Can you sing, talk in full sentences, or only a few words or short phrases?



## WEEK 2...CONTINUED

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 1



### THREE WAYS TO ASSESS EXERCISE INTENSITY

INTENSITY DESCRIPTIONS	RPE SCALE	EXAMPLES
<b>MAXIMAL, ALL-OUT EFFORT</b> Can't sustain for more than 10-60 seconds	10	Short bursts (10-60 seconds) of exercise as part of interval training program.
	9	Sprinting, tabata or HIIT class
<b>VIGOROUS INTENSITY EXERCISE</b> Heart rate, breathing and sweating significantly elevated above rest, can only say a few words or short phrases	8	Running, Hiking up and incline, Spinning class
	7	Jogging, Zumba, Swimming laps
<b>MODERATE INTENSITY EXERCISE</b> Heart rate, breathing and sweating slightly elevated, can talk but not sing	6	Brisk Walking, Dancing, Recreational bike riding
	5	
<b>LIGHT INTENSITY</b> Heart rate, breathing and sweating not noticeably elevated above rest  Can carry on conversation in full sentences	4	Easy walking, shopping or stretching
	3	
	2	
	1	
<b>REST</b>	0	Sitting, lying in bed

## WEEK 3

# BUILDING BALANCED MEALS



- Protein, carbohydrates and fats provide calories and energy to fuel your body.
- Your body needs a variety of each to function at its best!
- Create balanced meals and paired snacks to get the nutrients you need, feel fuller longer and avoid reaching for high calorie, unhealthy foods.

### PROTEIN

Essential for growth, tissue repair, immune function, preserving lean muscle mass, energy when carbohydrate is not available. (Discuss healthful vs. unhealthy protein options.)

Foods containing protein include: meat, fish, beans, tofu, milk, yogurt, eggs, cheese, nuts, seeds, etc.

### CARBOHYDRATES

Provide fuel for working muscles and the brain/central nervous system, enables fat metabolism and prevents protein from being used as energy. (Discuss healthful vs. unhealthy carbohydrate options.)

Foods containing carbohydrates include: vegetables, fruit, cereal, bread, pasta, rice, sugar, alcohol, etc.

### FAT

Essential for growth and development, absorbing certain vitamins, provides energy and cushion for the organs. (Discuss healthful vs. unhealthy fat options.)

Foods containing fat include: oils, avocado, olives, peanut butter, etc.

## EAT RIGHT WITH THE HEALTHY EATING PLATE

**Make half your plate vegetables and fruit (aim for mostly vegetables).** Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables are all great choices. Choose "reduced sodium" or "no-salt-added" canned vegetables.

**Vary your protein choices.** Eat a variety of foods from the protein group each week, such as: seafood, beans, lean meats, poultry and eggs.

**Enjoy your food, but be mindful of portion sizes.** Use smaller plates, bowls and glasses. Cook at home to be in control of what goes into your food as well as the amount you are served.

**Rate your plate:** Think back to one of your meals yesterday. Were you missing one of the food groups? How could you have improved this meal to fit the Healthy Eating Plate?

## CREATE PAIRED SNACKS TO SATISFY YOUR HUNGER LONGER!

A paired snack is two healthful foods that, when put together, can give you lasting energy (and help you to not feel hungry) between meals.

Pick a healthful carbohydrate (vegetable, fruit, beans or whole grain) and pair it with a healthful protein or fat.

**Examples:** yogurt and berries, cheese and whole grain cracker, apple and milk, celery and peanut butter.



## HEALTHY EATING PLATE

Use healthy oils (like olive and canola oil) for cooking, on salad, and at the table. Limit butter. Avoid trans fat.



The more veggies – and the greater the variety – the better. Potatoes and French fries don't count.

Eat plenty of fruits of all colors.



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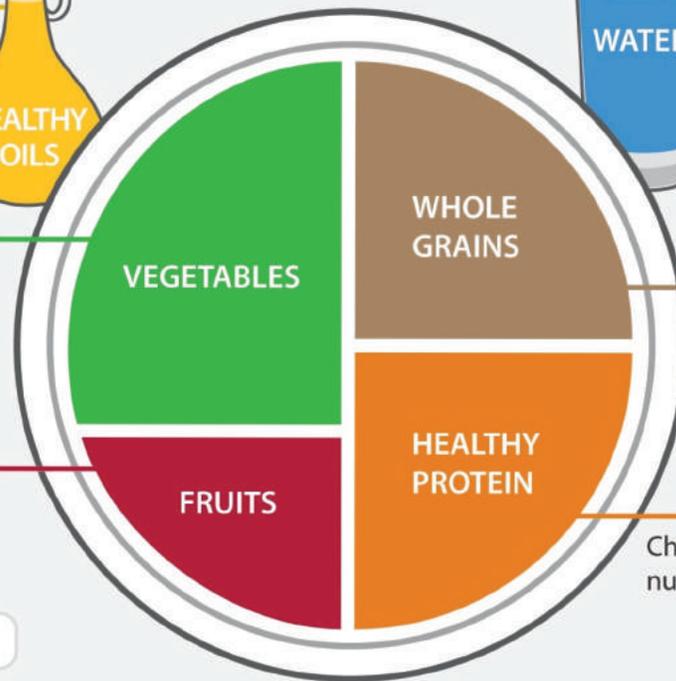
 Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health  
The Nutrition Source  
[www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource)



Drink water, tea, or coffee (with little or no sugar). Limit milk/dairy (1-2 servings/day) and juice (1 small glass/day). Avoid sugary drinks.

Eat a variety of whole grains (like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain pasta, and brown rice). Limit refined grains (like white rice and white bread).

Choose fish, poultry, beans, and nuts; limit red meat and cheese; avoid bacon, cold cuts, and other processed meats.



Harvard Medical School  
Harvard Health Publications  
[www.health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu)



## WEEK 4

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 2



### WEIGHT CONTROL

Muscles require more fuel (calories) than any other body tissue. Thus, building muscle mass and/or making your muscles stronger causes your body to burn more calories throughout the day and night.

The rate at which your body burns calories is called your metabolic rate. Without strength training, muscle mass naturally declines and your metabolic rate decreases - meaning you hang on to more of the calories you consume, and they are then stored as fat!



### HEALTHY LIVING

Prevents the loss of muscle mass that typically occurs as we age (we start losing muscle mass at age 30, can lose 3-5% per year without intervention).

Improves balance, coordination and posture, reducing the risk of falls, allowing us to continue doing all activities of daily living.

Can prevent or improve insulin resistance or Type II Diabetes as muscles consume sugar in the blood for energy.



### WHAT TO DO

- Strength train 2-3 times/week, non-consecutive days - muscles need 36-48 hours to rebuild, which is how they build strength.
- Work all of the major muscle groups: Chest, Upper Back, Abdominals, Lower Back, Shoulders, Arms (biceps/triceps) and Legs.
- For basic strength training, do 2 sets of 8-12 reps.
- Should be near maximal effort to complete last few reps (while maintaining proper form), if not - add more weight. If you cannot do 6-8 reps with good form, reduce the weight.
- Explore 3 ways to strength train - machines, free weights, body weight.
- You can stay with the same routine (adding weight as you are ready to) or mix it up.
- Proper form is essential to avoid injury and accurately challenge the muscle, ask your trainer if you have questions are unsure of form.



**Consider adding balance and flexibility training to your routine to improve functional abilities and prevent injury.**

## WEEK 5

# PORTION CONTROL AND READING FOOD LABELS



### HOW CAN I MEASURE THE FOODS I EAT?

Reading labels, as well as weighing and measuring foods, can help raise awareness of what we are eating. Creating a balanced diet with appropriate portions is important for weight loss and healthy eating habits.

### SERVING SIZE VS. PORTION SIZE

- A serving is a measured amount of food or drink, such as one slice of bread or one cup of milk.
- A portion is the amount of food you choose to eat. Many foods that come as a single portion actually contain multiple servings.

**Altman Rule** provides a quick and easy way to assess a food choice:

**Grams of Protein + Grams of Fiber > Grams of Sugar**

### MEASURING UTENSILS

- Use metal or plastic cups and spoons. Level the contents off using a butter knife. Read the line at eye level.
- A food scale is also an easy way to measure hard-to-measure items. Use to measure servings of snack foods, vegetables/fruits, meats, etc. Weigh meats after they are cooked.

**Servings: larger, bolder type**

**Serving sizes updated**

**Calories: larger type**

**Updated daily values**

**New: Added sugars**

**Change in nutrients required**

**Actual amounts declared**

**New footnote**

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	16%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	6%
Sodium 100mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 3g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 13g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. A diet of 2,000 calories a day is used to generate these values.	

### HAND METHOD

We can use our hand to estimate portion sizes. It is not perfect but can give us an idea of the amount of food we are eating if measuring tools are not available.



## WEEK 5...CONTINUED

# PORTION CONTROL AND READING FOOD LABELS



### THE PLATE METHOD

Review the Harvard Healthy Eating Plate from week 3.

The plate method helps to divide the plate to create a balanced meal. Your plate should be  $\frac{1}{4}$  protein,  $\frac{1}{4}$  starch and  $\frac{1}{2}$  vegetables and fruits (mostly vegetables). Add a small serving of dairy or healthy fat/oils.

Add more vegetables and some fruit to meals in place of starches. Aim for grains to be whole grains.

## WEEK 5

# HYDRATION AND HEALTHY BEVERAGE CHOICES

### WHAT IS DEHYDRATION?

Dehydration is a decrease in total body water which occurs anytime that fluid intake doesn't meet fluid loss. Water is the primary fluid in the body. However, the human body cannot store it, so it must be replaced every day.

#### THE ROLES OF FLUIDS

- Stay healthy and energized
- Regulates body temperature
- Aids digestion
- Carries nutrients around the body
- Cushions organs and joints
- Aids in removal of toxins and waste
- Keeps bowels regular

#### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEHYDRATION

- Thirst
- Dry lips and mouth
- Tiredness
- Irritability
- Headache or Dizziness
- Increase in heart rate
- Dark, strong smelling urine

## WEEK 5...CONTINUED

# HYDRATION AND HEALTHY BEVERAGE CHOICES



### HOW MUCH SHOULD I DRINK?

The Institute of Medicine currently recommends 104 oz (13 cups) for men and 72 oz (9 cups) for women. A good indicator of hydration status is urine, which should be almost colorless. Drinking water also helps you to feel full, and avoid unhealthy snacking/overeating.

### TIPS TO STAY HYDRATED

- Drink a glass of water when you wake up each morning and before you go to bed.
- Carry a refillable bottle of water with you throughout the day.
- Keep a glass of water by your desk or on hand where you work.
- Make sure you have a drink with each meal, snack and medication.
- Don't ignore thirst. Drink fluids when you feel thirsty.
- Set a daily fluid goal.
- Vary your fluids to include water, naturally flavored waters, seltzer, tea and coffee.
- Add flavor to water such as fresh fruit, lemon, basil, cucumber slices or mint leaves.

### FLUID CHOICES

- Avoid sugar sweetened beverages as much as possible.
- Choose beverages that do not contain calories and sugar.
- Sugar sweetened beverages have little nutritional value and can lead to weight gain and as well as increased risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.
- Be cautious of what is being added to your tea and coffee such as cream, sugar and added flavorings! Some sugary drinks contain as much calories as an entire meal! Think of these drinks as an occasional treat and get a small size.



## WEEK 6

# THE ROLE OF STRESS AND SLEEP



### INSUFFICIENT SLEEP AND CHRONIC STRESS BOTH SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT WEIGHT- WHY AND HOW?

1. Leads to fatigue, which leaves you less likely to exercise or be generally active.
  2. Leads to the over-production, and chronic elevation of cortisol, a stress hormone meant for "fight or flight" situations.
- Cortisol alters appetite, increasing cravings for sugary, high calorie foods.
  - Cortisol reduces the ability to burn fat, as the body shifts to faster sources of energy such as glucose (sugar) and protein (breakdown of muscle).
  - Cortisol increases rate of storing fat (body thinks it needs to store fat energy for constant, endless battles), and concentrates fat storage in the abdomen/belly.

### IMPROVING YOUR SLEEP QUALITY AND DURATION, AND LEARNING TO MANAGE STRESS CAN HELP REDUCE CORTISOL AND MITIGATE ITS IMPACT ON YOUR HEALTH.

How much, and what type of sleep is needed?

- Adults need 7-9 hours/night.
- There are 4 stages of sleep. All stages are important, however deep sleep (also known as REM sleep - REM stand for Rapid Eye Movement) is the most essential for feeling rested and staying healthy.
- The average healthy adult should get about 1 to 2 hours of deep sleep per 8 hours of nightly sleep.
- Sleep hygiene, which refers to your sleep environment and sleep-related habits (see below), is key to having a healthy sleep cycle.
- Implementing these practices will help you move through all 4 stages to get the deep sleep you need for optimal health and functioning.

### IMPLEMENT KEY PRACTICES TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP

- Make getting enough sleep a priority. Schedule for it and stick to it.
- Address snoring, either for yourself or with your partner. Snoring may indicate sleepapnea, which has been clearly linked to heart disease, stroke and obesity.
- Stick to the same or similar bedtime and wake time every day, even on weekends.
- Allow time to wind down: read (avoid screens, or put in "night mode" if available), go for a walk, listening to music or a take a warm bath or shower.
- Plan your eating to support sleep: eat your last meal 2-3 hours before bedtime, avoid sugary or refined/processed snacks. If you need a snack, choose something with healthy fat, protein or high in fiber, avoid alcohol in the evening as it disrupts sleep.
- Exercise during the day.
- Make your sleep space most conducive to sleep: Cool temperature, dark, reasonably tidy, free of allergens such as dust or pets, consider a white noise machine or fan.



## WEEK 6...CONTINUED

# THE ROLE OF STRESS AND SLEEP



**Stress is the condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that physical, mental or emotional demands exceed what he or she is currently able to manage. The stress response is the physiological emergency reaction system of the body, and is there to keep you safe in emergencies. There are two types of stress:**

### ACUTE STRESS

Acute stress, also known as the fight or flight response, occurs in response to an imminent threat or event.

- Generally necessary and beneficial.
- The body secretes hormones (adrenaline and cortisol) that cause heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar and breathing rate to increase, and muscles to tighten to meet the challenge.
- When the event has passed these markers of stress quickly return back to normal levels, which is known as the relaxation phase.

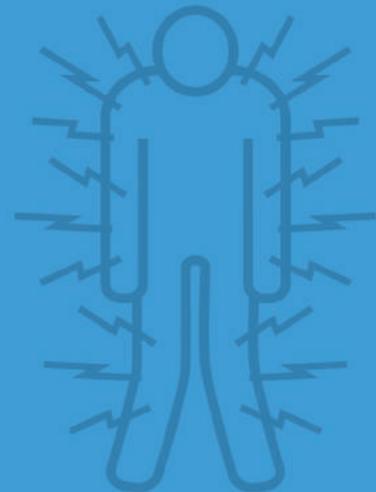
### CHRONIC STRESS

Chronic stress occurs when the perceived challenge, threat or emergency never fully subsides.

- The body remains in a heightened state of reaction with no real relaxation phase.
- This creates a new normal inside your body that requires it to have to constantly work harder to keep you functioning.

### THE PROBLEM WITH CHRONIC STRESS

Chronic stress causes a sustained over-production of cortisol. Chronically elevated cortisol causes the immune system to produce levels of inflammation that promote disease. Over time, continued strain on your body from inflammation as well as continually elevated heart rate, blood pressure and blood sugar can contribute to serious health problems, such as obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other illnesses, including mental health disorders such as depression or anxiety.



## WEEK 6...CONTINUED

# THE ROLE OF STRESS AND SLEEP



### STRESSORS VS STRESS

Stressors are events or conditions in your life or surroundings that trigger stress. You may not be able to immediately relieve the stressors, but you can take steps daily to relieve the sensation of stress in your body, and mitigate its long term impacts.

### SCIENCE BACKED WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS

There is no objective standard for how much stress management should be done each day.

- The key factor in managing stress for better health is to pay frequent attention to your body and mind (mindfulness), notice signs of stress response (physical, mental or emotional tension, elevated heart rate, fast shallow breathing, etc)
- Take steps to interrupt that stress response by evoking a relaxation response. Doing this will go a long way towards reducing cortisol and other stress hormone levels, and thus inflammation, and will greatly reduce the strain on the body.

Options range from just a couple of minutes to longer activities and practices. Incorporate ones that are enjoyable and effective for you.

- Exercise: 20 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity usually causes a relaxation response after.
- Practice deep breathing: This can be done anywhere. Breathe in for a count of 4, hold, then exhale for a count of 7 or 8. Rest, then repeat. Aim for 5-20 minutes.
- Do something creative that leads you to focus on it, such as art, music, or other hobby.
- Be outside in nature and practice being present and aware of what is around you .
- Try yoga or meditation.
- Carve out time to truly relax and do nothing but breathe, and clear your mind.

## WEEK 7

# UNDERSTANDING THE HABIT LOOP



### WHAT IS A HABIT?

Simply put, a habit is a behavior that is repeated regularly. James Clear (Atomic Habits)<sup>1</sup> says that habits are the small decisions you make and the actions you perform every day. Habit formation is thought to be the process by which behaviors become automatic. Charles Duhigg (The Power of Habit)<sup>2</sup> defines habits as behaviors that start as a choice, and then become a nearly unconscious pattern. Perhaps Merriam-Websters definition is the most relatable; a habit is a usual way of behaving or a tendency that someone has settled into.

<sup>1</sup>Clear, James. Summary & analysis of Atomic habits : an easy & proven way to build good habits & break bad ones. New York: Penguin Random House LLC, 2018.

<sup>2</sup>Duhigg, Charles, and Mike Chamberlain. The power of habit. New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2012.

### WITH REGARD TO HEALTH, WE CAN HAVE HABITS THAT ARE EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS (A.K.A. GOOD OR BAD HABITS)



Example of "good" health habit:

Every week day, I drop the kids at school and go right to the gym for the 8:30 class.

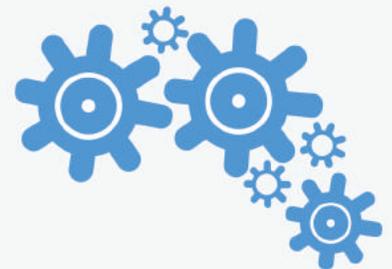


Example of "bad" health habit:

Every night, a couple hours after dinner, I end up raiding the snack cabinet.

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A BEHAVIOR TO BECOME A HABIT?

- 21 days is a myth spread after a 1960 book called Psycho-Cybernetics became widely popular. (It was written by a plastic surgeon who noticed his patients seemed to take about 21 days to get used to their new faces.)
- Researchers from University College London showed a huge variation in the time it took individuals to make a behavior a habit - anywhere from 18 to 254 days.
- Some people are more challenged to form habits than others.
- Some habits are more difficult to pick up than others.
- The researchers from the University College London found that it takes at least 66 days for "automaticity" to kick in.



## WEEK 7...CONTINUED

# UNDERSTANDING THE HABIT LOOP



### STEPS TO DECONSTRUCTING A NEGATIVE HEALTH BEHAVIOR, OR UNHEALTHY HABIT

1. Start by raising your awareness. Take some time to reflect on your day, and overall lifestyle. Identify specific negative/unhealthy behavior patterns.
2. Aim to interrupt a problematic behavior patterns that may have become unconscious, or automated.
3. Starting with the behavior (the "routine" in the above cycle) that you have identified, think forward in the cycle to identify the "reward". What is the payoff you are getting from this behavior?
4. Now think backwards in the cycle to identify the "cue" – or the trigger that leads you to seek the reward by initiating the routine.

### STEPS TO BUILDING A NEW POSITIVE BEHAVIOR, OR HEALTHY HABIT

1. Start with something small, and keep it as simple as possible.
2. Set yourself up for success by making the execution of the habit as easy for yourself as possible (put your workout clothes out the night before, meal prep, make you lunch ahead of time, etc.).
3. Be consistent. Aim for automaticity. Recent research shows that repetition is the key to converting a newbehavior into a habit – perhaps even more so than the reward. Aim for automaticity.
4. This applies to both positive and negative health behaviors, so be careful not to let poor health choices (such as stopping for a donut everyday on your way to work, or spending hours on the couch every night after dinner) become habit.
5. Actively identify, and work through barriers and challenges that seem to get in your way.
6. Stick with it! People often give up too early when they don't see the result or the reward they are looking for right away.

What cues can I identify that trigger me, personally?

How do I usually respond to these cues?

What are some healthy rewards I can brainstorm for myself?

# WEEK 7...CONTINUED

## UNDERSTANDING THE HABIT LOOP



### CUE

Triggers your brain to initiate a behavior. It is a bit of information that predicts a reward.

### RESPONSE

The actual behavior (habit) you perform. Whether it occurs depends on how motivated you are, as well as your assessment of the amount of effort and ability required.

### REWARD

The end goal of every craving. Delivers contentment and relief from craving (albeit, temporarily). Importantly, rewards teach us what behaviors we should remember in the future.



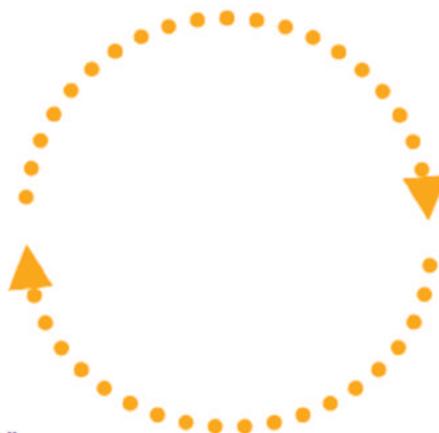
### CUE

Kicks the brain into automatic mode  
Tells it which habit to use



### REWARD

Prize telling your brain  
"this loop is worth  
remembering in the future"



### ROUTINE

Physical, mental, or  
emotional response

## WEEK 8

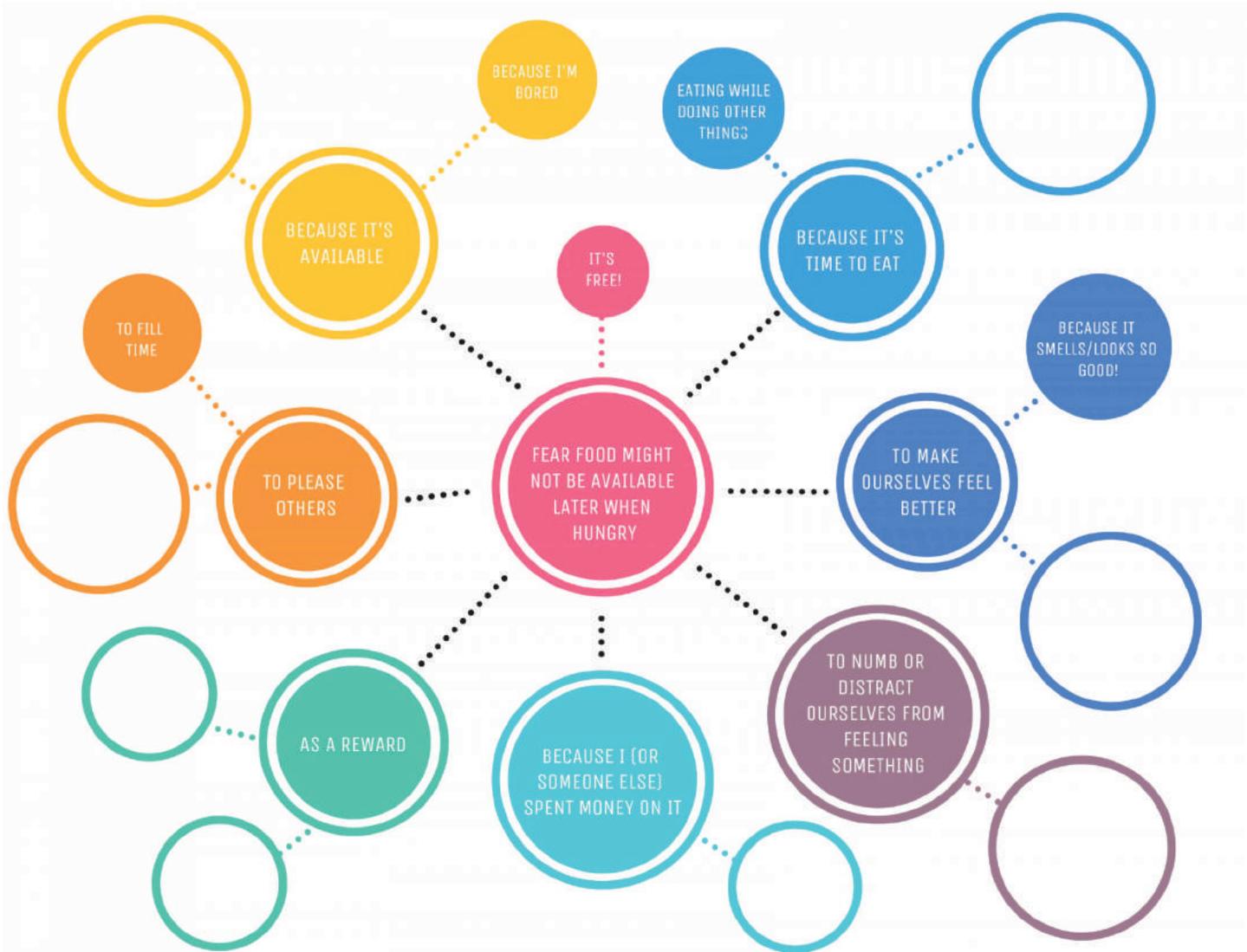
# MINDFUL EATING



### WHAT IS MINDLESS EATING AND WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Mindless eating is eating without awareness of what and how much is being eaten. It is putting food in our mouths for reasons other than hunger, without paying attention to levels of hunger or fullness.

What causes us to eat mindlessly? Here are some common scenarios...



### WHAT ARE YOUR CHALLENGES WITH MINDLESS EATING?

Feel free to add in your own personal challenges using the blank circles in the map above.

## WEEK 8...CONTINUED

# MINDFUL EATING



### HOW CAN I BECOME MORE MINDFUL OF WHAT I AM EATING?

Research has shown that making small changes to our daily habits, that increase our awareness of what we are eating, can directly lead to weight loss. Here are some solutions that can help increase your awareness, and avoid mindless eating.

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Only eat in the kitchen/dining room and at the table.
- Serve portions to a plate or container - don't eat out of the bag, box, carton, etc.
- Use smaller plates and taller glasses.
- Don't buy the high calorie/processed foods - if they are in your home keep them out of sight.
- Make the time to eat slowly, and without multitasking or electronics -TV, phone, etc.
- Do not stockpile - avoid buying in bulk.
- Maximize volume/minimize calories by filling half your plate with veggies and drinking water.
- STOP! Ask yourself if you are truly hungry or if one of the culprits above is at play.
- Plan your meals and snacks each day -have healthy paired snacks prepped and ready.
- Practice ways to say no, and don't be afraid to throw food out - don't allow yourself to consume it to "save" it from the trash!



**How have you overcome mindless eating in the past and/or how could you improve on this going forward?**

Use the worksheet in the downloadable curriculum PDF to create your personalized mindful eating plan.



**TROUBLESHOOTING SPECIFIC EATING SITUATIONS**



Don't skip meals trying to "bank" calories for later- this tends to backfire and can lead to more overeating than if you had not skipped meals.



Indulge intentionally - decide ahead of time which one or two items are truly your favorite, and truly enjoy them. This will help you feel good (and not deprived) about saying no to other items.



Take a moment to remember why you want to be healthy, and what your goals are. Stay focused on that as you approach the food table or the menu.



Eat a protein and fiber rich breakfast.



Re-adjust the portion sizes, not necessarily the recipe - it's better/more satisfying to have a small portion of something with real ingredients rather than fat/sugar free items that don't satisfy/make you want more.



Keep a food journal - knowing you will need to write it down often helps to keep choices in check.



Eat a healthy paired snack sometime beforehand, so you do not arrive hungry.



Wait it out - it takes 20 minutes for the satiety hormones to kick in and your brain to register that you are no longer hungry/are full. Remove yourself from the food area, drink some water and wait 10-20 minutes before eating any more.



**AT PARTIES**

- \* Don't linger near the food table, intentionally move away and focus on socializing.
- \* Choose the smallest plates or serving dishes.



Eat the veggies first and pile them on your plate. These will help you feel full and are difficult to overeat.



Focus on the positives - tell yourself about the healthy food you are giving yourself rather than focusing on the (unhealthy) food you are taking away.



**AT RESTAURANTS**

- \* Read the menu online before you go, plan what you'll get.
- \* Refuse the bread and/or chip basket. Ask the server to not bring it in the first place.
- \* Order unapologetically, don't be afraid to make healthier swaps - you are paying for this!
- \* Plan to take half your meal home to have for lunch the next day.
- \* Eat the veggies/salad first and drink water throughout the meal.
- \* Keep your hands occupied holding a glass of sparkling seltzer.
- \* Avoid sugary drinks and creamy sauces/dressings.
- \* Redefine value, value fresh, high quality ingredients and flavor over large portions.



Drink lots of water - staying hydrated can help curb hunger and increase satiety.



Get over the need to finish your plate - throw it out if you are full/don't want it. Don't continue eating something that isn't what you wanted, or "worth it".



Practice being mindful (aware) about your hunger level. Notice if you are truly hungry, or full. Stop eating when you are 80% full.



Stop the idea of food as reward - i.e. "it's been a stressful week, I deserve this cake, sundae, supersize nacho platter, etc..."

**HOWEVER THE EVENT GOES, GET BACK ON TRACK WITH YOUR HEALTHY EATING HABITS RIGHT AWAY, STARTING WITH BREAKFAST (DON'T SKIP IT), DRINK PLENTY OF WATER AND GET IN SOME EXERCISE.**

## WEEK 9

# EXERCISE INTENSITY & INTERVAL TRAINING



### EXERCISE INTENSITY

- Refers to how hard you are working during exercise.
- Can be measured in a number of ways, the three that we have used so far are: 1) physical perception (how you feel), 2) rating of perceived exertion (RPE) scale and 3) the talk test. Revisit the RPE handout from class # 2 to review the RPE scale and better understand what constitutes moderate and vigorous intensity.
- Now lets' add heart rate as a way to assess exercise intensity. Use the handout to quickly assess your target heart rate zone for moderate and vigorous intensity exercise.

### INTERVAL TRAINING

- One of the most effective ways to improve your health and fitness.
- Can be done in less time which is perfect for our busy schedules.
- Anyone can build interval training into their routine, it doesn't have to be all-out maximal intensity exercise to be effective.
- Anytime you can rev up the intensity above what you normally do, anywhere from 20 seconds to 2 minutes at a time, you are challenging your body to get more fit faster, and to burn more calories - both during exercise and throughout the rest of the day.
- Try this during your aerobic exercise part of the workout today.

### THE BENEFITS OF INTERVAL TRAINING

- Your body burns more total calories in an exercise session.
- Your body continues burning calories at a higher rate many hours after exercise.
- You get fitter faster.
- You stay engaged and motivated during your workout, less likely to get bored.

Remember the exercise guidelines for how much exercise is recommended each week for good health. Aim to do a variety of things you enjoy - the list of options for ways to be physically active is almost endless!



**WEEK 9****EXERCISE INTENSITY & INTERVAL TRAINING**

Age	Moderate Intensity		Vigorous Intensity		High/Max Intensity	
	60-70% Max HR		70-80% Max HR		80-90% Max HR	
	RPE 5-6		RPE 7-8		RPE 9-10	
	Beats/min	10 sec count	Beats/min	10 sec count	Beats/min	10 sec count
Up	121-141	20-24	141-161	24-27	161-181	27-30
20	119-139	20-24	139-158	23-26	158-178	26-30
25	116-135	19-23	135-154	23-26	154-174	26-29
30	113-132	19-22	132-150	22-25	150-169	25-28
35	110-128	18-21	128-146	21-24	146-165	24-28
40	107-125	18-21	125-142	21-24	142-160	24-27
45	104-121	17-20	121-138	20-23	138-156	23-26
50	101-118	17-20	118-134	20-22	134-151	22-25
55	98-114	16-19	114-130	19-22	130-147	22-25
60	95-111	16-19	111-126	19-21	126-142	22-24
65	92-107	15-18	107-122	18-20	122-138	20-23
70	89-104	15-17	104-118	17-19	118-133	20-22
75	86-100	14-17	100-114	17-19	114-129	19-22
80	83-97	14-16	97-110	16-18	110-124	18-21
85	81-95	14-16	95-108	16-18	108-122	18-20

## WEEK 10

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONNECTIONS FOR HEALTH



### OUR BRAINS ARE HARDWIRED FOR CONNECTION

- Our ancestors relied on social connections and relationships for survival, and research shows that we still experience social isolation and loneliness as a crisis that elicits a significant stress response.
- Over time, that stress response causes systemic inflammation which leads to many chronic health conditions and a shorter lifespan.

“Loneliness is the subjective feeling that you are lacking the social connections you need.”  
Vivek Murthy; “Together” 2018

### HEALTH RISKS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

- Increased risk of premature death
- 50% percent increased risk of dementia
- 29% increased risk of heart disease and a 32% increased risk of stroke
- Higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide

More than half of all Americans report feeling lonely – and that number is on the rise.  
(54% in 2018, 61% in 2019 – Cigna Report)

1 in 4 adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated.

Loneliness is more dangerous than obesity and as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day

Similar to  
smoking

15

cigarettes a day



## WEEK 10...CONTINUED

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONNECTIONS FOR HEALTH



### THREE DIMENSIONS OF LONELINESS; AIM TO EXPERIENCE CONNECTION IN EACH OF THESE AREAS

- Intimate, or emotional loneliness: Longing for a close confidante, someone with whom you share a deep mutual bond of affection and trust, such as a family member, spouse/partner or close friend.
- Relational or social loneliness: Longing for quality friendships and social companionship.
- Collective loneliness: Longing for a network or community of people who share your sense of purpose and interests.

### POSITIVE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS ARE KEY TO PREVENT LONELINESS AND HELP PRESERVE HEALTH

Everyone's level of need for social connection is different, so it is impossible to set one standard for all to aim for. Some people crave lots of human interaction, while others find it draining. An introvert might need one confidante, whereas an extrovert might require a bigger group. Our needs are also likely to vary throughout our lives. Everyone needs relationships though, and quality is more important than quantity.

### HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS YOU CAN DO TO FEEL SOCIALLY CONNECTED:

- Maintain contact with existing friends and reconnect with your old friends.
- Make an effort to carve out time to be with the people you care about.
- Practice truly connecting with people in ways big and small - speak about your feelings with authenticity and listen to others non-judgmentally, with empathy and compassion.
- Create a setting where people can let their guards down and safely confide in each other.
- Create connection opportunities that meet regularly (automaticity), or require planning and preparation.
- Volunteer - this is a great way to start building a sense of community, make new friends and connect with others.
- Connect with the people you encounter throughout your day - say hello, learn names, chat when possible.
- Join a group or explore a new activity.
- Seek to connect with people who are working on healthy living, and be mindful when with those who are not.
- Use social media only as a way to plan meet-ups, not as a substitute for connection or a way to withdraw socially.

## WEEK 10...CONTINUED

# REVIEW, REFLECT & MOVE FORWARD



### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- Review session topic list - any lingering questions, thoughts or concerns?
- Discuss how all the components of living a healthy lifestyle (food, hydration, exercise, sleep, stress, being mindful, planning for success) work together.
- Discuss the reality of success (see graphic). Think about an example of success in your life -- was that an easy, straight line process, or did it look more like the path on the right?
- Be kind to yourself. It is important to set goals and expectations for yourself, but you are much more likely to be successful if, instead of criticizing yourself, you are your own cheerleader and #1 supporter.



### HOW WILL I KEEP THESE NEW HEALTHY HABITS GOING BEYOND THIS CLASS?

- What are your biggest takeaways from this program? What is working well for you now? What will you continue doing going forward from this class?
- What did you learn about yourself throughout the past several weeks?
- Getting off track sometimes is normal. How will you know you have gotten off track in the future, and what will you do to get back on your plan?
- What are the goals you would like to tackle in the future? How will you refine the goal so it is doable, and then plan what needs to be done to make that happen?
- Try different practices and habits that work for you to keep you motivated and on track: Plan meetups with friends—perhaps new friends from this class, consider getting an activity tracker or use an app on your phone, continue logging (food, exercise, sleep, stress, whatever you want to work on), collect/share recipes, plan-plan-plan.... Planning takes practice - but it is well worth it to step out of your comfort zone on this one.

## The Reality of What Success Looks Like

