

The 6 Ingredients Necessary to Change Your Behavior

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Most of our behaviors weren't consciously chosen. **We just seem to find ourselves doing the same things each day, day after day.**

It doesn't matter if the behaviors are harmful, make zero sense, or take us further from our goals. It also doesn't matter if the behaviors we want to do are good for our health, bank account, or the future. We can't seem to get ourselves to do the positive behaviors regularly.

However, changing your behavior is the key to changing your life!

Want to change your behavior? The winning recipe includes these 6 ingredients:

1. **A clear objective.** For example, it's insufficient to tell yourself that you want to eat less. What does that mean? How many calories is that? What is the breakdown of macronutrients? How often are you going to eat? It's important to be specific. A few examples include:

- Eat fewer than 2,000 calories per day.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water each day.
- Eat whole fruits, such as apples, bananas, oranges, or berries for snacks.

2. **Consistency.** You can't create a new behavior with a single effort. You haven't quit smoking because you refused your urge one time. You don't go to the gym regularly just because you've gone one time. **Repeating a behavior over and over is necessary if you're going to make a lasting change.**

- The less time you've put in, the more likely you are to have a relapse and return to your old behavioral patterns.

3. Immediate rewards. New behaviors only last if there's a reward for doing it, or a significant, immediate punishment for not doing it.

- Take your favorite unhealthy food as an example. You might love ice cream. There's an immediate reward for eating ice cream. There is a punishment, but it's more of the long-term variety. You're not going to destroy your figure in a day by eating a bowl of ice cream.
- Consider most positive behaviors, such as going to the gym. The majority of the benefits only happen in the future. Avoiding the gym is actually rewarding in the short term, but harmful in the long-term. That's why so many bad habits are hard to break, and good habits are hard to create.
- **Work out a more immediate reward you can give yourself for changing your behavior.** Avoid this step at your own peril. Willpower is in short supply.

4. Starting small. Avoid starting with the objective of going to the gym for an hour each day or meditating for 90 minutes straight. These are fine objectives but start slowly. Begin by meditating for 10 minutes, or just showing up at the gym and doing whatever is enjoyable to you.

5. Tracking progress. See how many days you can perform your new behavior in a row. Keep track of your results - all the pounds you lose, dollars you save, pages you read, or minutes you meditate, for example.

- **Be sure to also track the benefits you notice as a result of changing your**

behavior.

6. Persistence. There will be plenty of bumps in the road. It's imperative to stay the course for as long as it takes. Regardless of how many setbacks you endure along the way, you simply must keep trying. How could you possibly fail in the long-term if you never gave up?

It can be challenging to change your behavior. **Unfortunately, many negative behaviors are enjoyable in the short term, and many positive behaviors are only positive in the long term.** This makes it difficult to stop engaging in negative behaviors and difficult to create positive behaviors.

Define your desired behavior, give yourself rewards, and do your best each day. Success will be yours!