

A photograph of a couple walking hand-in-hand on a beach at sunset. The woman is on the left, wearing a white t-shirt and dark pants, and the man is on the right, wearing a red and black plaid shirt and dark pants. They are walking away from the camera towards the ocean. A large, dark rock formation is visible on the right side of the frame. The sky is filled with warm, orange and pink hues of the setting sun.

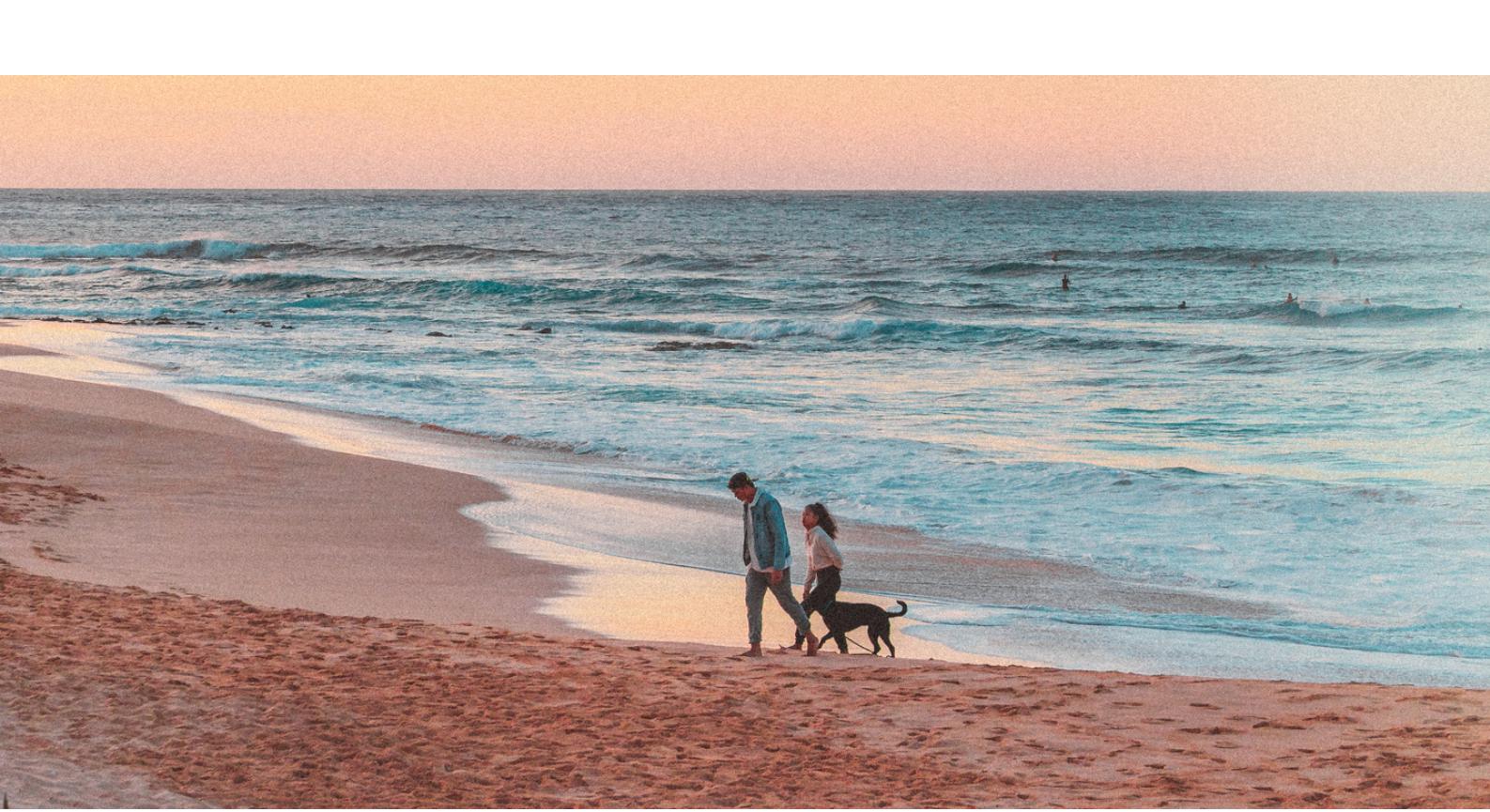
Top 10 HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HABITS

Healthy Lifestyle Habits

When changing or improving our health it's not just about modifying the way we eat. It's also about looking at the way we live our lives and rethinking our daily habits. A habit is simply a learned behaviour that has been repeated so many times, it has become something we do without thinking - whether it is good or bad. We can make significant progress in our journey to improve health and wellness or lose weight by making a conscious effort to retrain ourselves to think and behave in new ways.

Use this coaching tool to identify habits you want to change and habits you want to create which will, through repetition, lead to a new set of lifestyle behaviours that support the level of health you really want. Eventually these new habits will turn into unconscious new behaviours that you naturally do without thinking - essential for maintaining improved health and wellness long term.

WHAT HABITS DO YOU WANT TO MAKE... OR BREAK?



1. LIFESTYLE BALANCE

You have likely heard the phrase ‘work/life balance’ but do you practise it? Where is your life out of balance? Do you spend too much time at work? Are you constantly checking emails and messages? Is your social life unfulfilling? Do you find you have little time for the things you really enjoy? Do you have no time for family, or hobbies and interests? Does exercise feature at the bottom of your priority list? Consider what could provide you with a better balance of the things you have to do, and the things you want and need to do for your optimum wellbeing and happiness.

2. REWARDS

Many people use food (or sometimes alcohol) as a way to reward themselves after a tough day’s work or when feeling tired or stressed. Consider other ways you can reward yourself, giving you other things to look forward to. This could be just 10 minutes to read your favourite book or listen to an interesting podcast, spend time outdoors, chat to a friend etc. Or it could be a bigger reward like booking a massage or an exciting day out. Building in daily rewards and breaks from routine have been shown to improve mood and lessen the temptation of using food inappropriately.

3. SWEET HABITS

Many people have formed a habit of eating sweet foods for comfort or distraction. This can lead to imbalanced blood sugar, which is followed by more cravings for sweet foods, giving you an instant short-term boost in energy, but this is quickly followed by a slump in energy. Often you are left feeling tired and irritable, reaching out for something sweet again and again. Think of other ways you can take care of your ‘real’ needs, for example replacing sugary snacks with healthy fruit. Consider whether you are using a sugar fix as a way to deal with difficult situations and provide you with comfort.

4. ME TIME

When life is busy it's common to give up what little time we may have set aside for ourselves. Time for ourselves, when we are not focusing on who or what needs our attention, is essential for our mental wellbeing and ability to stick to a healthy life plan. Time off allows you the space to consider what you really want and to be in control of your life rather than outside influences being in control of you. Some of the world's most successful people plan their time off first. Look at the week ahead and consider when you can take time for yourself, and then consider what you would most like to do with this time. When improving our health, it's essential we have time to plan out our week and get everything we need in place so we can stick to our health goals, allowing time for healthy meal prep and regular exercise that we enjoy.

5. RELAXATION

Do you often feel stressed? Do you find it difficult to relax? Do you find yourself running at 100 miles per hour all day and then falling into bed exhausted? Just 5-10 minutes of practised relaxation can break this spiral and restore energy throughout the day, reducing feelings of stress. Have a relaxation routine last thing at night to improve the quality of your sleep throughout the night and take a few minutes during the day to clear your mind and chill. You will be amazed at the difference just a few minutes of relaxation a day will make.

6. TV & SOCIAL MEDIA

The average person spends the equivalent of 17 years in front of the TV in their lifetime and 2 hours per day on social media! There is little benefit with either and certainly neither contributes to our health and wellbeing. Consider what you could do if you reclaim this time back. You could have more time with people you love, for activities you enjoy, to take up hobbies and interests that enrich your life.

7. EXERCISE

Many people say they don't like exercise or can't find time for it. In reality, we can find time for what we want to do. So the key is increasing our desire to exercise. Exercise, as we know, has many benefits to our physical and emotional health and is a great way to maintain a healthy weight. If you are unfit you may feel like exercise is a hassle because you don't enjoy the feeling of being unfit. But if you were fit and healthy with plenty of energy would you choose to exercise? Most people say they would – so consider what you would really like to do if you were fit and healthy. What exercise would you really enjoy? What did you enjoy when you were younger? Start slowly and build up – even if you are currently very unfit, start with a short walk and build up slowly. You will soon find your enjoyment for exercise, and your desire to do it, increasing quickly.

8. SUPPORT NETWORK & CONNECTION

Do you have a strong support network around you? As humans we need other people and to feel connected. In recent times it has been more and more common for people to spend huge amounts of time on their computers and working from home. This can leave us feeling disconnected and unsupported leading to unhealthy eating habits. For example, during Covid almost half of women and a quarter of men gained weight and this was in part because of the reduction in human connection. Consider whether you feel sufficiently connected to, and supported by, others around you and build in more time to be in the physical presence of others. We are social beings, not social media beings.



9. DEVELOP A HEALTHY MINDSET

Do you have a healthy mindset? Do you tend to focus on the negative or positive aspects of life? Changing our mindset to have a more positive outlook is simply a habit that needs practise. You can't change your first thought but you can change your 2nd thought so when you catch yourself thinking negatively, stop and consider this thought, and the impact it has, and change it to something more positive. Having a gratitude list really works – when you think of what is wrong with your life or what has not gone well, think of all the things that you already have in your life and what has gone well each and every day. You will quickly begin to feel more positive and feel more motivated. You can then learn to respond differently to life's day to day stresses and find you won't be reaching for unhealthy foods to deal with an unhealthy mindset.

10. FOCUS ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

When we embark on a health journey, the destination can sometimes seem like a long way off and that our progress is too slow. Many people tend to focus on what they have not done, rather than what they have achieved, leaving them feeling frustrated and dissatisfied. When you take time to consider what you have achieved (however small) this changes the way you perceive yourself and reminds yourself of how far you have come. With Health Coaching we always focus on, measure, and reward results. Every step towards health is a positive one that needs acknowledging. Think about your strengths. Think about all the things you have achieved in your life and take a moment to acknowledge how capable you are. You can then bring these strengths and capabilities into your health goals now, confident that you can achieve anything you set your mind to.



Which of these habits would you like to work on first? They are all simple, but each one can have a huge impact on how we behave, how we feel and the success of our healthy lifestyle plan. Remember that habits are simply behaviours that have been practised daily until they become an automatic way of being. We can now choose to practise a new way of behaving, which will lead to a whole new outcome and a healthier, happier life.

Choose 2 habits you will focus on this week:



Work with a Health Coach

Need support to create a new healthy lifestyle and improve your level of happiness? Consider working with a Health Coach. Health Coaches work with clients to inspire, motivate and support them to rethink their lifestyle habits and change them for the better so they can reach a whole new level of health, wellness and life satisfaction.

