



Building positive, healthy habits is one of the most powerful tools you can use to be happy and productive in all parts of your life. We are the sum of our decisions and actions in life - we have the power to control our decisions and our lives.

How do we make positive healthy changes in our lives, and the lives of others?

- Change is challenging and requires attention and constant decision making
 - I can make decisions that reinforce my wellness goals.
 - I can help other people do the same!
 - If myself, or others, are making decisions that do not support our goals, why are we making that choice?

- Over time, through attention and positive decision making, I can build new habits
 - What is a habit?
 - A regular action, tendency or practice
 - Habits are usually hard to give up!
 - We all have habits – some are positive and help us work toward our goals, others are negative and don't help us work toward our goals
 - Many habits are personal, though there are a few that everyone should embody for health and wellness!
 - General examples include drinking enough water, sleeping, exercising, and eating nutrient dense foods.

- Why are positive habits important?
 - Once built, hard to break. This makes it easier to stay healthy and be an example for others.
 - It is easier to build new, positive habits than quit old, negative ones.
 - over time, the new habits naturally replace old ones

- Habit Chaining! (super underrated)
 - One of the best ways to build a habit is to 'chain' it to a preexisting one
 - Pick something you already do every day (brush teeth, shower, get out of bed, etc.) and stick a habit to it.
 - "Every time I take a shower, I do 20 pushups first."
 - "Every time I brush my teeth, I stand on one leg for :30 each side."
 - "Every time I eat a meal, I have a vegetable."
 - "Every time I drink a soda/pop, I have a glass of water first."
 - "Every time I _____, I _____."
 - Trigger (existing habit), New Habit, Healthy Reward

- I want to change a lot. Do I do this with all my habits at once?
 - NO! Start small, with one habit, and work on it. Then, over time (2 - 4 weeks), add another

- What is the important action for change?
 - Identify YOUR why!
 - Create a plan (action steps - chained habits) and be consistent
 - Every time I _____, I _____.
 - Trigger (existing habit), New Habit, Healthy Reward
 - Lean on support network - commit to be consistent with your choices
 - Put the plan to action – decisions that support your goals every chance you get.
 - Be gentle with yourself - if you struggle, it's ok! Find help or continue to do your best. Change happens over time and being positive with your self - view is crucial!

Block Activity

1. Have multiple sizes, shapes, colors of blocks, and a container to put them in
 - 1 The blocks are each a healthy habit you want to start
 - 2 The container is you/your life
2. Demonstrate how you can't pick them all up at once - too many, and you drop a bunch (fail the task) trying to do it all together
3. Then take one at a time (name each block - maybe the first one is sleeping 30 min more a night, drinking 2 cups more water a day... etc.) at place them in the bin as you talk about focusing on one healthy change at a time - soon the container is filled!

Rock, Pebbles and Sand Activity

1. Facilitator puts large rocks in a jar and asks, "is this jar full", then puts pebbles in the jar and asks, "is the jar full", finally the facilitator puts sand in the jar.
2. Then the facilitator empties the jar and starts by putting sand, then pebbles, and then rocks into a jar (with not all of them fitting).
3. Explain to the group what the rocks, pebbles and sand represent:
 - Rocks are the truly important things such as family, health, and relationships.
 - Pebbles are the other things that matter in your life such as work, sports or school.
 - Sand is the remaining "small stuff" like social media or having the coolest clothes.

Key message: You need to make sure you have enough room in your life for the truly important things.

4. Ask the group to share what their rocks, pebbles and sand are. Ask if anyone will share...or ask for a show of hands...if their lives are full of too much sand and not enough rocks. Most people get out of balance at different times in their lives.
5. Now connect the same messaging to health.
 - Rocks: good nutrition, physical activity, hygiene, hydration, sleep.
 - Pebbles: Special Olympics sports teams.
 - Sand: workout clothes.

Key Messages: With your health it's also important to focus the most energy on what is really important: eating right, getting enough sleep and exercise and staying hydrated.