

# Building a New Healthy Habit

**“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” – Aristotle**

## What is a habit?

A habit is any activity that a person does deliberately at first, and then after repetition, continues to do without focus.

## Macro Goals and Micro Quotas

To successfully make a healthy lifestyle change, you have to balance your macro goals (big picture items you wish to accomplish) with the daily habits, or micro quotas, necessary to achieve them.



**Example of a long-term, macro goal:**  
Lose 10 pounds in 6 months.

Choosing one tiny habit, or micro quota, and setting a low threshold for starting can make the task seem more accessible and actually increase the likelihood of success!



**Example of a tiny habit or micro quota:**  
Exercise 30 minutes twice a week.

## Find a Spot in Your Routine

For something to become a habit, there needs to be a regular trigger that tells you to perform this behavior.



**“Exercise 30 minutes per week” is not a habit, because there is no regularly occurring trigger to make it a routine behavior.**

Instead, identify when and where you will take a specific action to reach your goal:



**“Do a 30 minute yoga video at home after taking the kids to practice on Monday and Thursday evenings.”**

The specific spot in your routine (taking the kids to practice) acts as a trigger for your new habit. Perform your routine on this cycle as often as you can!

## If-Then Planning for Obstacles

Running into obstacles is a normal part of the process of developing a new healthy habit!

To develop your If-Then plan to overcome obstacles, first identify the obstacle or trigger you would like to control. Then, create your If-Then plan to help you stick to your healthy habit.



**Example of a trigger:**  
*Pressure of household chores*



**Example of a plan:**  
*“If I have household chores to finish, then I will ask my son to help me after my yoga video.”*

If-Then planning helps you stick to your plan without wasting time deciding what you should do next!

## Visualize Your Habit in Motion

Visualization of the process of what needs to be done to achieve your goal can be motivating and help you achieve success!

Think about your tiny habit, your Micro Quota, and what it is like to practice it. Can you describe yourself going through the process? What are you doing? How do you feel in the moment? How do you feel afterwards?



**Use the flow chart on the next page to get started with building your new healthy habit!**

Resources: [www.sparringmind.com/good-habits/](http://www.sparringmind.com/good-habits/)  
[www.greatergoodberkeley.edu](http://www.greatergoodberkeley.edu)  
[www.99u.com](http://www.99u.com)

# How to Build a New Healthy Habit

