

Title Slide	Creating New Habits: Tips for Helping Them Stick
Slide 1	Last month we talked about how habits are formed and how the brain works. Today, we're going to take a look at some of the keys to success in creating new habits and having them stick.
Slide 2	1. Experiment
Slide 3	Think about creating a new habit as an experiment in your health and vitality. Pick something that is meaningful for you and that you want to have as a regular part of your life. Take time to explore why it's important to you and how your life will be different once it is a regular pattern of behavior, perhaps even replacing something less healthy.
Slide 4	2. Set a Long-Term Goal
Slide 5	Next, set a long-term goal, one that you want to attain within the next 6 months. For example, Julie wanted to start exercising on a regular basis. She set a long-term goal of being able to exercise 30 minutes a day on 5-6 days per week.
Slide 6	Julie knew that having exercise as a regular part of her day would help to keep her diabetes under control, help to manage her weight and improve her feelings of fatigue and depression. Since she hadn't been exercising at all recently, Julie also knew that she had to start with smaller steps.
Slide 7	3. Create Small Steps to Success
Slide 8	Once Julie knew what she wanted, she needed a pathway to get there. Long-term goals can seem overwhelming at first. It's important to set small steps to success. When we do that, we are more likely to build positive results one step at a time and create a feeling of, "I can do this!" as opposed to setting ourselves too big of a challenge and failing early.
Slide 9	Julie's first step was deciding what type of exercise she wanted to do, that she could actually see herself committing to. She spent her first few days exploring options before deciding on walking for just 5-7 minutes a day.
Slide 10	She knew that she could fit in walking in her neighborhood, during a break at work, or even at the mall on her way home from work. It felt like a small enough step that she could commit to doing it every day.
Slide 11	4. Make a Commitment
Slide 12	Knowing that it takes time and repetition to form a new neural groove in the brain, which is the foundation of forming a habit, Julie set a target of two months to firmly commit to walking from 5-7 minutes every day.



Slide 13	Some behavior changes can take as little as 21 days to form a new habit. Other, more complex changes, may take 3 months or more. The key is repetition and commitment.
Slide 14	5. Make Repetition Easy
Slide 15	What makes repetition easier and more likely to be successful? There are several things. First, it's easier to form a new habit when we decide to do it every day and, if possible, at the same time every day. It's more difficult to form a habit and to make it stick when we only do it a few days each week and at different times of the day.
Slide 16	6. Think Through Barriers
Slide 17	Thinking through what might get in the way of accomplishing the small step we've chosen and planning for barriers can also be important. For example, Julie decided that she wanted to walk for 5-7 minutes first thing in the morning, after having her cup of coffee but before getting ready for work. She planned to set her alarm 10 minutes earlier in order to have the time.
Slide 18	Knowing that it might be raining outside on some days, she decided that she would walk anyway, regardless of the weather, and that she would prepare for it the night before.
Slide 19	Knowing that she might feel rushed some mornings or miss her alarm, she decided that if that occurred, she would walk up and down the stairs for 5 minutes of her first morning break at work. She also decided that no matter what else was happening in her life, she would make sure that she did not go to bed without walking for at least 5 minutes.
Slide 20	7. Set a Timeline for Reevaluation and Change
Slide 21	Another practice that makes repetition easier is to initially set a time line for firmly repeating a behavior daily without changing it. For this first step, Julie decided to set a goal of daily walking for 5-7 minutes for two weeks.
Slide 22	After the two weeks, Julie would reevaluate and decide if she wanted to change anything. Those changes might include things like increasing the amount of time she walks or the time of day.
Slide 23	Julie will continue to build her walking program until she reaches her long-term goal of exercising for 30 minutes, 5-6 days per week.
Slide 24	Join us in a few weeks for more tips to success in health behavior change.
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