

Movement in spine improves health

Dr Michael Osborne,
Chiropractor

YOU are designed to move – did you know your cerebellum, the part of your brain responsible for co-ordinating movement, contains more nerve cells than the rest of your brain?

There are about four times as many cells co-ordinating your walking as there are controlling the rest of the processes in your body.

Movement is the key to keeping tissue fluid mobile.

With every movement of a muscle or joint, new nutrients are brought into the surrounding tissues, and cellular waste is moved on to be broken down.

A lack of movement can increase the build-up of cellular waste, which can lead to inflammation and eventually pain.

Dr Roger Sperry, neuropsychologist and Nobel prize recipient, has stated “90% of the stimulation and nutrition to the brain is generated by the movement of the spine”.

A lack of movement in the spine from a sedentary lifestyle, or dysfunctional joints, can inhibit the flow of the fluid around your brain and spinal cord, potentially reducing the available nutrition.

Chiropractors focus on encouraging movement, particularly at the joint level, especially in the spine.

A professional assessment of your joints in the spine can optimise joint motion, ensuring inflammation is minimised and you get maximum benefit from your movement.

Seek the services of your chiropractor for a spinal assessment, and above all else, move any way you can – it's good for you.

Dr Michael Osborne is a chiropractor at HealthGuard Wellness, East Toowoomba, and a member of the Chiropractors' Association of Australia.



GATHER YOUR CHEER SQUAD: Want to break a habit? Find the people who'll keep you on track when you start to waver.

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

How to break bad habits

Alison Hill

SO YOU'VE decided to make some changes. Changes for good – or at least changes that are good for you.

But it turns out habits are hard to break. That's kinda the point, really. Because when you think about it, the purpose of a habit is for it to be something you do automatically.

Habits free you up to not have to be consciously obsessing about every task, but rather saving mental energy and decision space for the big things in life.

On average, the majority of us make about 60,000 decisions every single day, and what's really interesting is that 95% of those decisions are exactly the same decisions we made yesterday.

So why do we keep making the same decisions?

Well, beside from the fact that habits are hardwired behavioural patterns in our brain that we need to reshape over time, there are a few other reasons they stick around longer than we might like them to.

There's a pay-off

Behaviours only stick around when we get something out of them. It might be simply that the action feels good, or that we connect with others. Or it might even be that just for a brief moment the pressure of it all is lifted.

Think about what the pay-off is for you, without judgment.

It's not bad or good, it's just an acknowledgement that there's something we love about this habit that keeps us coming back.

Others are doing it

We are hardwired for connection and if people we like are into something, then maybe we will be too.

Quitting the habit may be scary not just because of the change, but because quitting might challenge the 'group' we associate with.

But remember, the mates who stick around in the long term are the ones who will cheer on your choices.

Short-term goals always win out

Sure, we've all got grand

plans of change and we realise it'll take time, but habits stick around when the short-term gain outweighs the long-term gain. We'll tackle that health goal just after this last piece of chocolate cake. Promise.

Given these reasons then, how do you break it off with a habit that may not be serving you?

Here are five key ways to help you shift into new behaviours – new behaviours that may well surprise you about how good they are.

Reach out

Ask around, research ways you might make this change, explore possibilities.

Have fun as you start to consider what the new world might be like for you. Sure, you want to “exercise more”, but maybe you put the boot camp aside and step into the local ultimate frisbee comp.

Set up your environment

Ever tried quitting sugar? Sure the willpower is high early on, but the moment life starts to get hectic, the ice

cream in the freezer starts calling to you.

Whatever you are trying to achieve, set up your environment for success. Clean out reminders and clear the decks – at home, in the car, at work.

In place of what you've cleared out, put the things that will help you instead. Kale smoothie anyone?

Know why you're even bothering

The clearer you can be on why this change is important to you, the easier it will be to stick to it.

Don't go with beige responses like “it's good for me”, instead nut out what it will mean for you to be able to stick to this change.

Really picture yourself as the running, non-smoker, water-lovin' Energizer Bunny.

Track your progress

Motivation comes when we have a strong sense of progress – when we can see that we're nailing it, small step by small step.

Get creative in the way you visualise the change.

Use charts, photos, checklists. There are even a tonne of great apps such as Habit Streak that will cheer on your progress.

Rally your cheer squad

Nothing is quite like the accountability of others to keep you honest.

So gather your cheer squad, the people who'll be unashamedly rootin' for ya – like the fanatics on the hill of a footy match. These are the people who'll keep you on track when you waver.

Finally, remember that no limit exists to how often you can start a new habit. It's not like you only get 20 chances and then that's it.

You can start afresh every day if you need to. Each moment is a chance to make a new decision. So if you do happen to 'slip', be gentle with yourself and know that your next decision is the one that counts.

Alison Hill is a psychologist and co-founder of Pragmatic Thinking, a behaviour and motivation strategy company.

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