Starting Healthy Habits

We are almost two months into 2022! When many of us think of the new year, we are motivated to get a great start by making some meaningful changes in our lives. But what happens when we’re no longer motivated? How do we stay disciplined on the road to becoming the best version of ourselves that we can possibly be? We focus on building good habits!

According to Merriam-Webster, a habit can be referred to as a usual way of behaving or something that a person does regularly. Habits are essentially routines that we no longer have to think about doing before we act. They can be simple like brushing your teeth after eating spicy food or washing your hands after doing yard work, but they can also be key to healthy human development and reaching your goals.

We all know that forming habits, especially good habits, takes work and mindful practice. But with enough intentional effort, these new routines will truly become habit and we will begin to do them repeatedly without having to think or stress about them.

Research has found that all habits go through the same process—cue (trigger), craving, response, and reward. Keeping this process in mind, below are some tips to start building healthier habits.

* **Remove any triggers that may deter you.** Understanding the environment and the activities that are linked to your bad habits is crucial in managing habits.
* **Understand and then reduce your craving.** Understanding why we crave certain things allows us to find healthier ways to manage these cravings.
* **Change your response.** Knowing your triggers and understanding your cravings can help you figure out how to trade a bad habit for a better habit. A great way to do this is to make the bad habit more difficult.
* **Know your why.** Motivation fades quickly. Knowing why you want or need to change your habits is a more lasting form of intrinsic motivation that goes a long way in achieving our goals.
* **Give yourself some grace.** Habit forming is a process and can be difficult. We’re not perfect but we’re trying, and that’s important.