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Wise & Well

Welcome to the new Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person well-being each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.

Change Your Habits, Change Your Life

We all know that cultivating healthy habits can add years to our lives and may protect us from health problems as we age. We also know it's in our best interest to kick out bad habits and replace them with good ones. However, for those who grew up on a steady diet of 80's cartoons, we also know that knowing is only half the battle.

The other half of the battle is going through the arduous and involved process of identifying and breaking the bad habits that run chunks of our day-to-day lives. Concurrently, it's a good idea to identify new habits we'd like to replace those bad ones with. Research shows that replacing a bad behavior with a good one is more effective than stopping the bad behavior alone. Sounds easy, right?

Well, it can be if you understand the three Rs.

According to Harvard Medical School, the three Rs — reminder, routine and reward — can help you break unhealthy habits and create healthy ones. Because all habits tend to follow this basic three-step pattern, if you can break down a bad habit into these components, you can identify what triggers that habit and, by proxy, what really needs to change.

The Three Rs

— **Reminder:** A trigger initiating the behavior.

— **Routine:** The behavior or action you take.

— **Reward:** The benefit from the behavior or action.



To put this in context, picture the three Rs flowing in a continuous circle. Here's an example of someone with the unhealthy habit of spending too much time on their phone:

Floyd is spending time after work with his family. A notification on his phone goes off (reminder). After he checks it, he decides to take a look at something else and pretty soon begins scrolling (routine). He soon discovers a whole new world of information (reward) and, in the process, winds up ignoring his family.

So, the easiest way for Floyd to break this cycle is to ignore his phone. However, in the real world, that is easier said than done. In addition, the issue is not the phone and the sweet, sweet promise of scrolling but the habit itself.

What Floyd needs to do in this example is ask himself, after he checks the notification, why does he continue to mindlessly search for new information? Was it because he was bored? Was he looking for the hit of dopamine that scrolling provides? Or was it something else? Floyd should take the time with questions like these and examine what triggers the behavior. He should also make a list, looking for patterns throughout this examination process and self-discovery.

At the same time, he should make a list of things that make him feel better than scrolling. This could include reading a book, playing with his kids or conversing with his partner. It could also be something simple, like indulging in a snack or savoring a cup of tea.

Once Floyd learns his routine, the trigger for the behavior, and the reward that accompanies the habit, he can figure out what things need to be shifted around so he can break the cycle.

For example, WebMD recommends turning off alerts and establishing tech-free time or phone-free zones. Amazon produces 648 results when you search “phone jail.” The New York Times recommends [making your smartphone less appealing](#) by changing the screen to grayscale or deleting apps.

If Floyd invests the time and effort in learning about his habit, his solution could be as simple as asking himself, “What else could I be doing right now?”

Habits arise through repetition and, in many ways, are helpful. Most of us already have an established daily routine that we’ve built to structure our day. Over time, the components of such a routine become more or less automatic and free up head space. This allows us to deal more effectively with everything else we encounter throughout our day. When a routine switches into unconscious action, it becomes one of the many habits that run our lives. By cultivating the healthy ones and working to eliminate the bad ones, we allow ourselves to live our best and healthiest lives.

Source: [heart.org](#) | [health.harvard.edu](#) | [nytimes.com](#)

Monthly Moves

Calf (Gastrocnemius) Stretch

Increase your flexibility and prevent injury by stretching your gastrocnemius in your calf as part of a complete exercise program. Start slowly, don’t ignore pain and don’t overdo it.

01 Stand three feet in front of a wall. Take one step toward the wall with your right foot. Place both hands on the wall for support.

02 Lean forward, keeping the left leg straight and the left heel on the floor.

03 Hold for 30 to 60 seconds.

04 Switch legs and repeat.

Tap [here](#) for a video demo.

Source: [saintlukeskc.org](#)





Oven-Braised Veal Stew with Black Pepper and Cherries

A rich, wintry stew with a tart, slightly sweet bite from sour cherries gets its deep flavor from tender veal. Choose pork shoulder for a fattier, slightly juicier dish.

Source: [foodandwine.com](https://www.foodandwine.com)

Ingredients

- 2 pounds boneless veal stew meat or pork shoulder, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- 2 tablespoons beef or veal demi-glaze
- 2 cups fresh or undrained thawed frozen pitted sour cherries
- 2 1/2 tablespoons honey
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 cardamom pod
- 1 dried bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Place veal pieces in a bowl; sprinkle all over with pepper and 1 teaspoon salt. Sprinkle with flour and toss to coat. Melt butter with oil in a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven over high. Working in two batches, add veal; cook, stirring occasionally until browned on all sides, six to seven minutes per batch. Transfer the veal to a bowl using a slotted spoon; set aside. Pour off drippings from Dutch oven.
2. Stir together 3/4 cup boiling water and demi-glaze until demi-glaze is dissolved. Add demi-glaze mixture, cherries, honey, cinnamon, cardamom and bay leaf to Dutch oven; bring to a boil over high, scraping bottom of pan to loosen browned bits. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer 10 minutes. Uncover; nestle veal in cherry mixture.
3. Cover and roast in preheated oven until veal is very tender, about one hour and 30 minutes. Remove and discard cinnamon, cardamom and bay leaf. Stir in remaining 1 teaspoon salt. Sprinkle with parsley and serve immediately.

Make Ahead

Stew can be made up to three days ahead; let cool, then cover and refrigerate. Reheat gently over medium.