



Hello Think your Health friends,

Welcome to the second issue of the THINK YOUR HEALTH newsletter. My goal is to send a weekly email straight into your inbox packed with snippets of health information and other items of interest.

How to make walking a daily habit?

In my formative years and as a young adult I always associated exercise with perspiration, pain and hard work. If I was not perspiring or breathing heavily that was not a good work out.

You might have similar misconceptions about exercise and what a healthy activity entails. In the last 2 years my wife and I have found walking a highly enjoyable form of exercise. We try to go for our morning strolls around 7AM. Sometimes we start a bit later around 7.30AM.

We are lucky we live in a neighborhood with a lot of trees and shrubbery giving us a semblance of a forest. How we enjoy these walks in the morning, the crispness of the morning air and the peacefulness it gives our mind whilst walking.

We are all well aware of the benefits of walking:

- 1) It promotes your cardiovascular health
- 2) Short walks after eating can improve your blood sugar
- 3) Strengthens your bones and balance
- 4) Increases your muscle strength and endurance
- 5) Boosts your energy and your immune system
- 6) Improves your mood
- 7) Lowers your blood pressure
- 8) Improves your sleep
- 9) Lowers risk of Alzheimer's
- 10) Supports and eases joint pain

Need I write more. It is a "free drug" and provides so many benefits!!

So you are asking yourself how can I make it a habit.

There are **2 things** which helped me get into the right mindset.

Firstly, we used a productivity hack which was highlighted in this book by the authors of **Make time**. The questions you need to ask yourself is what is the one thing that would give yourself the most satisfaction if you completed, what is essential to get done for your overall well-being and what would give you the most joy. The authors referred

to this as the **Highlight of the Day**. Putting emphasis on this one habit even if nothing else is accomplished during the rest of the day you can at least end the day with a degree of satisfaction because this one goal was achieved.

The second thing for a habit to be triggered you need an appropriate cue. We associated a time (7 AM) to start this habit loop. 7 Am triggers a cascade of behaviors to get ready for the walk, drinking a glass of water, starting our apple watch to track the walk, putting on our walking (work-out) clothes, leading to putting on our walking shoes. Once we feel the crisp morning air we are more than ready to start the walk.

It is important to choose a cue which is **specific** and which leads to the **beneficial action** which you want to achieve. In this way you can cement this good habit once you have gone through multiple cycles of the habit loop leading to the reward of well being for that day.

So in summary you need to identify a cue, in our case it was a time cue.

This is followed by the behavior(action), in this case our morning walk.

And, the last part of the loop is the reward. This can be the walk itself, or might be you are looking forward to a cup of coffee at the end of your walk or perhaps a long hot shower. Rewards are important as they satisfy cravings and motivate us to go through this loop again: **cue---routine---reward**.

There will be days that you are not motivated, you lack the energy or the weather might be not right and we find all kinds of excuses to skip the walk (or exercise). That is ok. It happens to all of us. The point is once you find a habit which you want to incorporate in your life, the more often you repeat it the more likely it will be cemented as a habit. Building a habit essentially means training your brain to do the same thing over and over without having to pause and think about it. You want your habit to run on auto-pilot. The behaviors are over time woven into your brain.

Quote of the week:

You can do anything, but not everything."

David Allen.

My favorite things:

The book I mentioned above is indeed one of my favorite books. It focuses on a framework which are four steps to be repeated daily so that you can [MAKE TIME](#) in your day. In this way you can pursue the one thing which you need to get done that day.

How MAKE TIME works according to the authors:

1. **Highlight:** prioritize one activity and spend dedicated time on what matters most for you.
2. **Laser:** Be laser focused. Tactics are described and presented to beat and overcome all kinds of distractions.
3. **Energize:** different strategies are discussed to recharge your brain and your body.
4. **Reflect.** Evaluate at the end of the day, on what can be improved and what can be dropped.

[Make time](#) is written by Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky.

[Signs you ARE magnesium deficient \(Why magnesium is so good for you!\)](#)

LOW Magnesium



♥ **Welcome to the Health Zone:**

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Dr. John**

