

## Shape Family Wellness Program

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Wellness Coach: \_\_\_\_\_

# WELLNESS CHALLENGE CREATING CHANGE: HABITS

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Complete the following questions related to your target habit. Track your progress in regards to your goal on the calendar below for one month.

1. Pick a habit you would like to focus on changing.

My habit is \_\_\_\_\_

2. List one or more reason(s) why changing this habit is important to you:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Set a SMART—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound—goal based on the habit you desire to change.

*Example: I will stop snacking on cookies and chips after dinner by the end of the month by going for a walk instead.*

S \_\_\_\_\_

M \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_

R \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_

4. List one person who can help you stay accountable to your goal: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What could your first step toward accomplishing your goal be? \_\_\_\_\_

6. When you accomplish your goal, what will your reward be? \_\_\_\_\_

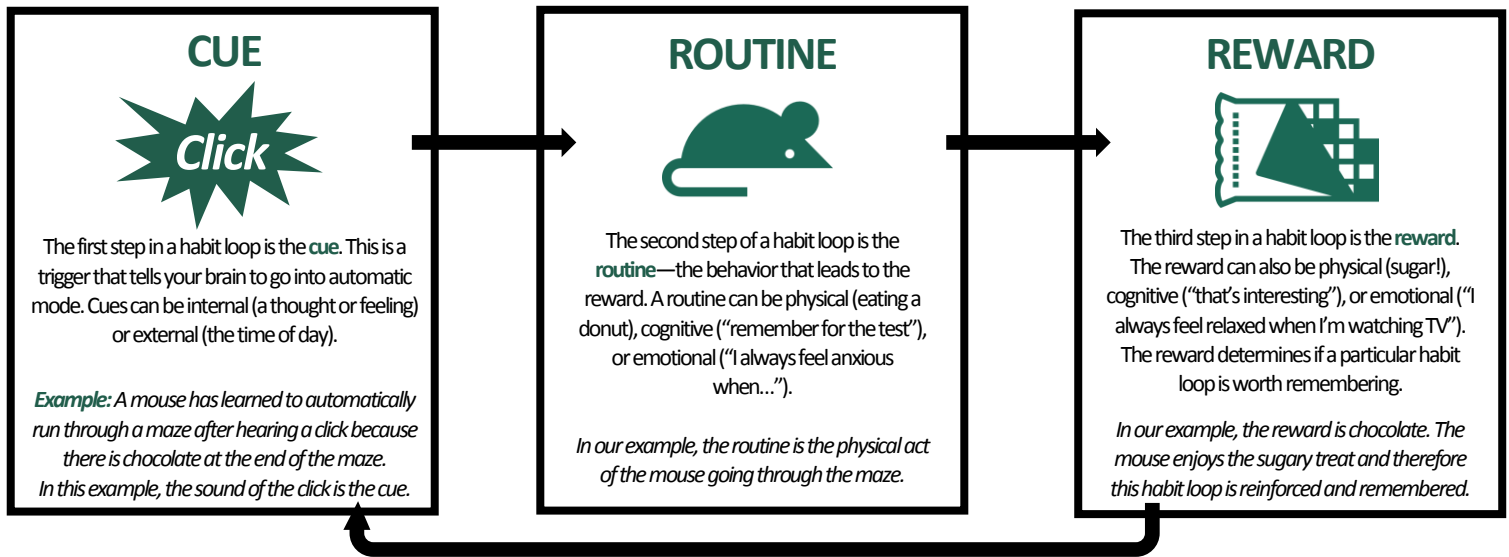
7. What are some barriers that you anticipate encountering and can prepare for? How do you plan to overcome these barriers?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Track your daily progress on the calendar below.

	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa

# HABIT FACTS

Do you feel like the choices you make each day are products of well-considered decision making? If so, it may surprise you to hear that many of our daily choices are habits. Continue reading to learn about habit loops and how they work.



## HOW TO CREATE NEW HABITS

As a behavior becomes more habitual, our brains are trained to become more efficient and allow automatic patterns to take over. Understanding the habit loop and how habits work makes them easier to control.

An effective **cue** must not only trigger a **routine**, but it must also create a craving for a **reward**. When your brain starts anticipating—or craving—the reward, the pattern of behavior will become automatic. This’s why it’s so easy to pick up a donut or cookie even when you’re not hungry—you don’t actually want that donut, your brain starts anticipating a sugar rush and you automatically reach for a treat.

To change a habit, it’s important to keep the **cue** and the **reward** the same, but choose a new routine. This is **the golden rule of habit change**. Let’s say you want to stop snacking at work. First, determine why you snack. If it’s because you want a break from a task, you can easily find a new routine. Instead of walking into the cafeteria when you are bored, try walking to a co-worker’s desk or going for a short walk. This will elicit the same reward of a brief distraction from your work, but you will have avoided the routine that tempts you to snack.

## KEYSTONE HABITS

**Keystone habits** are stronger than others habits and have the power to change how other habits work. Making a keystone habit of going for a run before work can start a ripple effect of other patterns, like choosing to eat a healthy breakfast and drinking water throughout the day instead of coffee.

Identifying keystone habits can be difficult, but once they are identified and changed, they have potential to have big effects.

### Why do keystone habits encourage wide-spread change?

- They produce **small wins**. A series of small wins convinces people that larger achievements are possible.
- They encourage change by creating structures for you to **thrive**. Starting your day with exercise creates the framework for a productive day.
- They create a culture that embodies **new values**. A run before work places value on health and activity that will eventually spill over into your other choices throughout the day.

## WILLPOWER

The best way to strengthen **willpower** is to make it into a habit. Sounds easy enough, right? The reason some people can easily resist the cookie platter at a mid-afternoon meeting and others eat two is because they have made **self-control a keystone habit**.

- **Resist Temptation**: Repeatedly resisting temptation can increase willpower while practicing a new habit loop. This willpower can also spill into other areas of your life.
- **Practice Belief**: For habit change to be permanent, people must truly believe that change is possible. Believing in your own capacity to change and that things will get better might be what’s holding you back from getting that new habit to stick.
- **Anticipate Possible Challenges**: Expecting challenges to arise allows you to plan how to deal with stress, pain, and temptation ahead of time. Anticipating the cookies at your afternoon meetings gives you the chance to come up with a plan for how you will resist them and practice your willpower.